THE GREAT WORLD WAR

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FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

BY RUSSELL

H. M. Victor Emmanuel III

King of Italy

THE·GREAT WORLD·WAR

A·HISTORY

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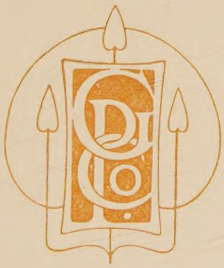

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THE GREAT WORLD WAR

VOLUME V

CHAPTER I

THE PROGRESS OF ITALY'S CAMPAIGN

(May–December, 1915)

Italy's Lengthy Assailable Frontier—The Northern Battle Line—Consolidation of Positions along the Trentino and Carnic Frontiers—Eight Months' Mountain Fighting and its Results—The Advance on the Isonzo Sector—Preliminary Disappointment—Tolmino, Gorizia, and the Carso—The October Offensive—Trench Warfare—Summary of the Italian Gains.

THROUGHOUT the summer and autumn of 1915 Italy was doing spade-work. That is not a flattering way of describing the daring and incredible ingenuity of her soldiers in the Alpine passes of the Val di Daone, the Val Sugana, and the Col di Lana; or the scientific pressure exerted by her engineers and her artillery, backed by some desperate bravery on the part of her infantry in the Gorizia sector of the fighting: but it qualifies very well the preparations that had to be made before Italy could take part in a damaging offensive against Austria in the spring of 1916. The strategical disadvantages under which Italy laboured when she declared war need be only briefly recapitulated. The Austrian frontier of the Trentino, the Tyrol, and along the Carnic Alps had been so designed that Austrian forces posted there could be dislodged only by great and continuous effort, and while they were not dislodged were an unremoved menace to the rear of any Italian army proceeding eastwards to attack Austria on that frontier of the Isonzo where alone was a vulnerable point. Thus it was impossible to strike at that vulnerable front, of some 30 miles or so, without first securing immunity from a counter-stroke along some 500 miles of mountainous frontier in Northern Italy. The blow was struck by Italy at the Isonzo front, and slow as was the progress, and disappointing as the results were to expectations that were too extravagant, this was the fundamental sector of the Italian offensive. But the offensive-defensive along the other portions of the wedge-shaped Austrian intrusion of territory was not less remarkable,

and will remain perennially interesting as an example of skilled mountain warfare with modern weapons. The task set to Italy's mountain troops was that of a rectification of the northern frontier. This was accomplished by driving the Austrian posts from it inwards, and then by taking up new positions, which could be strengthened against counter-attack.

This northern Italian line of battle —not continuous, of course, as are to all intents and purposes the lines of trenches scored across France, but joining a series of strategic points—began at the Stelvio Pass on the west, running southwards thence to the Tonale Pass, and farther south still past the Val di Daone to Lake Idro and Lake Garda. Then the line ran eastwards past Ala before it turned north again to pass over the valley of the Astico past Brenta, over the Val Sugana, outside the valley of the Cismone, and so farther north to the Col di Lana, Cortina on the River Ampezzo, and the other fortified posts of the Cadore. This line was held, attacked, pushed back along all its length between May and October, 1915. At first the work proceeded with speed. Before the beginning of July a great part of the right side of the Daone Valley, the Val Vestino group between the Idro and Garda lakes, the Vallarsa, Tesino in the Brenta Valley, Fiera di Primiero in the Cismone Valley, and Cortina in the Ampezzo Valley, were occupied and strengthened. Along some 200 miles of frontier the Austrian outposts fell back under the pressure of the Italian attack.

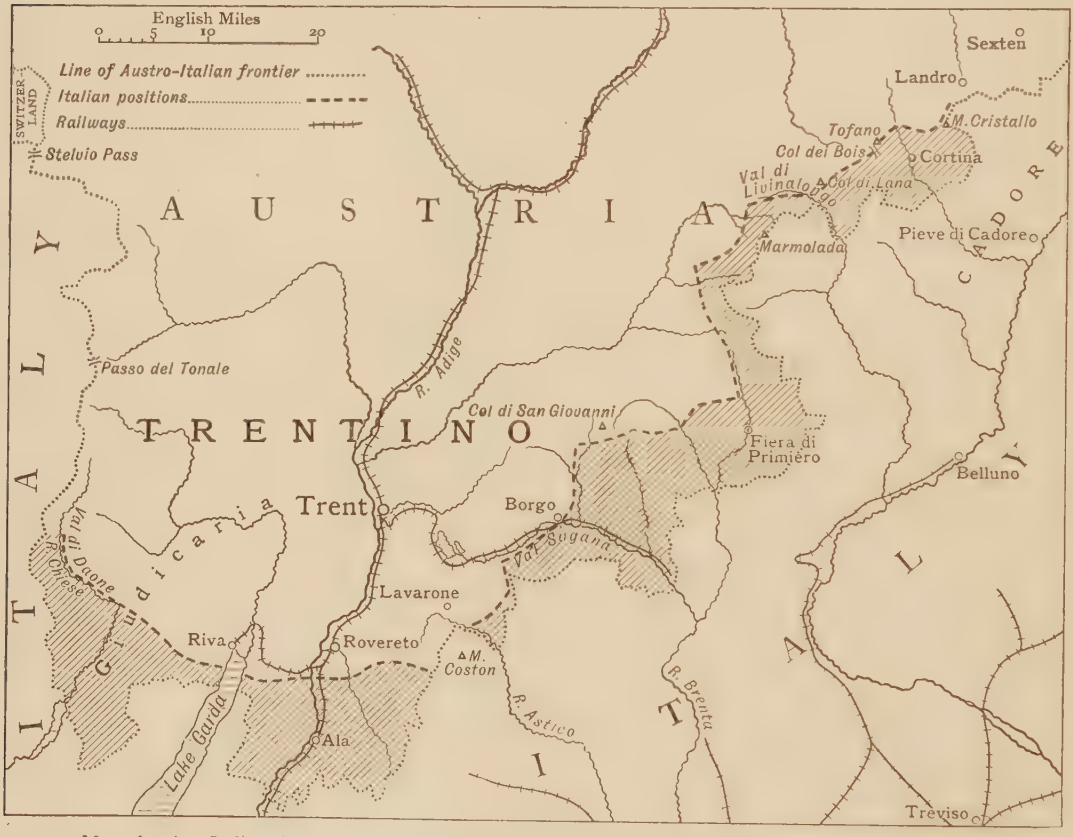
During July the pressure on the Cadore region, which is in the north-east corner of Italy, was increased. In the high valleys from Cordevole to the Padola the attack was pressed; the whole region of Ampezzo fell into Italian hands in July; and a strong foothold was obtained on the mountain ranges which descend from the Col di Lana towards Agai and Pieve di Livinallongo. This campaign in the north-eastern corner was typical of the warfare waged along the long frontier of the Trentino wedge. The results may appear small when estimated in terms of mountain heights and little-known mountain towns; but the rough ground, the serious obstacles prepared by the enemy, and the tenacious resistance offered by the Austrians, who in this region were the pick of their mountain troops, made the achievement extraordinary. Through August the Italian pressure in these heights went on without slackening; in September the strong position of Mount Coston was taken; and through October and November, in the face of an intensifying severity of weather, some very strong positions on the Col di Lana, and the mountain ranges which stretch from the Sasso di Rezzodi to Ornolla, were conquered after a severe struggle.

Farther to the north and north-east in the Carnic Alps some swift offensive operations at the beginning of the war seized the high passes of Degano, Raccolana, and Dogna, and thus shut the way to any Austrian incursion along that difficult front. After this the Italians contented themselves with standing on the offensive at these points, while letting Austrian attacks

Drawn by H. W. Koekkoek

A Climb to Victory: the Alpini, barefooted, scaling Monte Nero, to surprise the Austrians on the summit at daybreak

batter themselves fruitlessly against these strongly consolidated positions. The Italian Carnic troops joined hands with those of their neighbours on their left in the Cadore sector in repulsing the Austrians from the precipitous domitable labour, spirit, and ingenuity to points at which it was least expected, and the fire of their heavy pieces against Malborghetto, Predil, and Plezzo was most efficacious. To sum up broadly results which comprised advances vary-



Map showing Italian Advance along the Trentino and Cadore Fronts and Principal Points seized by the Italians during 1915

group of the High Degano, which they had taken by a surprise attack at the beginning of the war. They stretched out their other hand, the right, towards the extreme left of the main Italian attack on the Isonzo front, and took part in attacks on Plezzo. Throughout these operations the Italians continually made effective use of their artillery, which they dragged with ing from a mile to ten or twenty miles along this 300-mile front of the Tirolo-Trentino, the Italians at the end of 1915 were in possession of the right side of the Daone Valley (west) and of the Chiese Valley just to the south of it, well beyond Condino; of the Ledro Valley and Bezzeca, west of Riva on Lake Garda, which is the apex of the Trentino; of the Adige

Valley as far as Mori on the west side and as far as Rovereto on the east. Notable progress had been made to Brento and to Borgo in the Val Sugana; and progress less in mileage but not less in effort from Tonale in the extreme west to Pontebbana in the east. During these operations the amount of fighting, gauged by the numbers taking part in any engagement, was not great, but it was continuous. It demanded qualities of energy, initiative, and perseverance of the highest order; and when there was any conflict the advantage usually rested with the Italians, who were continually "leading" — in the language of the boxing ring — and who always went forward, never back. Gradually the opposing forces closed on one another, and the contest took the form of trench warfare even when trenches and barbed wire were strung along heights ten thousand feet above the sea. But in these regions the strategic positions of the forces were no longer in favour of Austria. If the Italians could advance no farther without paying a high price, the Austrians were in the same position. A flank attack on the main Italian armies was no longer practical, and the campaign in its largest element was a face-to-face contest on the Isonzo front, with the latent possibility that the Italians in the north-eastern corner might, unless carefully watched, inflict a damaging blow on the Austrian flank.

All the foregoing fighting, notwithstanding the diversity of conditions under which it took place, and the variety of the objects at which it aimed, might be classed as offensive-defensive operations. But along the course of the Isonzo from where the Italians pushed forward to Plezzo on its upper waters to where the river drains through marshes into the Adriatic, the Italian main campaign was offensive. The front, though continuous, was divisible into four sectors. The most northerly was the sector Plezzo to Tolmino, with Monte Nero as an object to be reached between these two points. Tolmino was one of the two great Austrian bridgeheads. Gorizia was the other; and while the loss of either implied the risk to the Austrians that the Italians would thrust a widening wedge into their front, Gorizia was the more important of the two, because a crossing made good here would permit the deployment of the penetrating force into the plain. The next section southward was Tolmino to Plava. Then the crucial sector which stretched from Plava over the hills to the shoulders of Oslavia, Calvario, and Podgora, running onwards to the south across the narrow avenue of the Gorizia plain till it again stepped up on to the shoulders of the great plateau of the Carso, with Monte San Michele as the most northerly, and Monte Sei Busi as a more southerly but valuable height. Thence the sector, when it had been pushed to its limits by the Italians, went on through Selz and Monfalcone to the sea.

The campaign on the Isonzo began at a pace which was modified in a very noticeable degree as the Italians found themselves brought up against the Austrian defences. Between May 24 and June 4, Italian forces came right up to the Isonzo except at

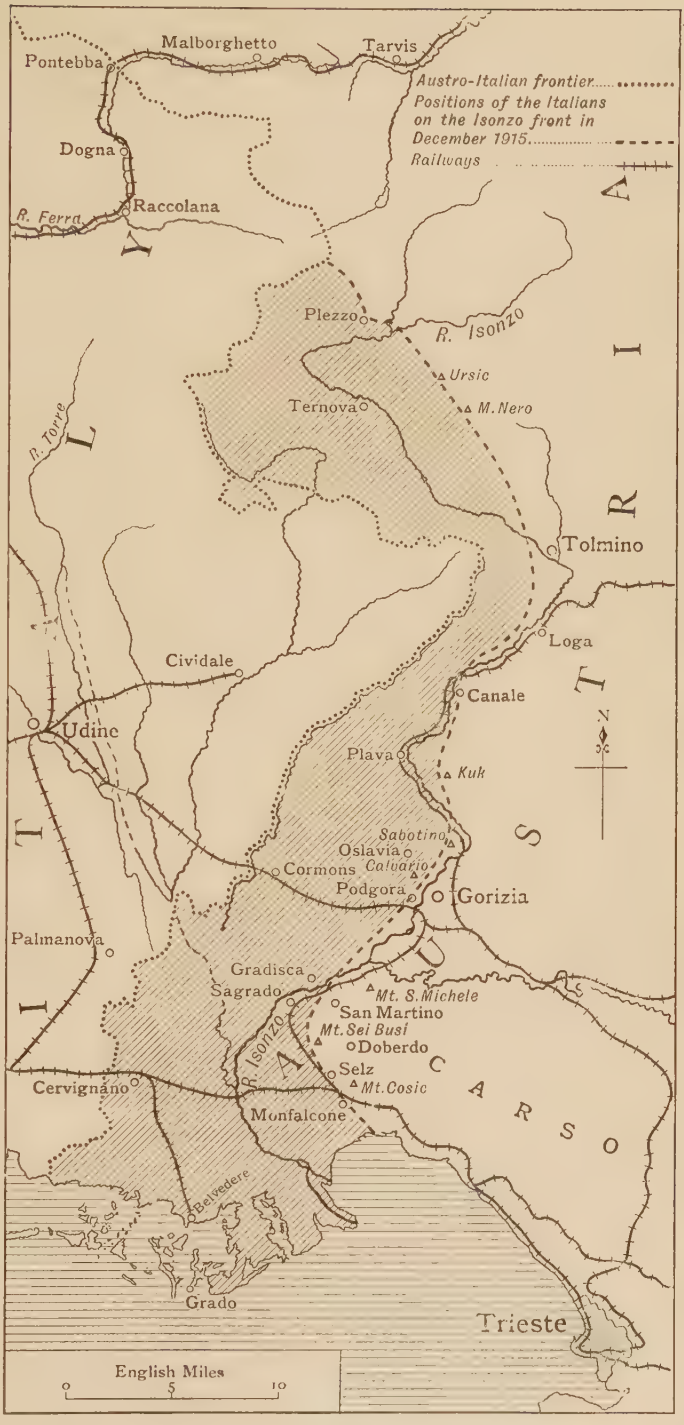
the Austrian bridgeheads of Gorizia and Tolmino, and north of Tolmino crossed the Isonzo and occupied the lower slopes of Monte Nero. That does not appear at first sight to be slow progress for an army on the move, but it might have been a great deal better but for two misfortunes, of which the first was a natural one, and arose from the fact that the Isonzo was in heavy flood (which it seldom is so late in May), and the other was a military one, due to the hesitation of the cavalry leader.

The only way to get through the Austrian position at Gorizia, without the great loss of life consequent on battering a way through by a frontal attack, was to outflank it; and this could be most readily done by seizing that plateau of the Carso which is thrust forward like a bastion into the low ground and overlooks the town. The cavalry general had been instructed to seize the bridges that cross the Isonzo at Pieris, just north of Monfalcone, cross them, and if possible obtain a footing on the Carso to be held at all costs. He learnt that the Pieris bridges were mined, and while he was still hesitating to risk it they were indubitably blown up. Perhaps a quick dash would have caught the Austrians unawares, saved the bridges, and what was of supreme importance, saved time. The Italian cavalry was out of action—as cavalry—from that time forward, and the Isonzo had to be crossed by pontoon. Then the river took a hand against the army which had thrown away the first trick. It came down in spate, delaying the passage of the troops, and gave the opportunity to the Austrians to blow up a canal bank at Sagrado, and so flooded the country that the advance of the Italians against the southern half of the Carso was blocked. The delay was of the greatest value to the Austrians, for though their defences were already strong, they were enabled to strengthen them further with men and machine-guns. From May 28 to June 3 the flood waters held up the Italian advance; and though by June 5 their first troops got across the river near Pieris and drove the Austrian covering troops back, the main attack on the Carso, which should have been made along a wide front, was again postponed till more troops could be brought over the river, higher up, to support it. It was not till June 27, after a struggle in which the attacking infantry displayed the greatest valour and determination, that a crossing at Sagrado opposite the blunt point of the Carso salient was consolidated, and the Italians could enter on the preliminary investment of the plateau.

Farther north on the middle Isonzo, at Plava, the Italians fought their way on to the left bank of the river, and succeeded with much difficulty in widening and consolidating that important bridgehead which separated the two strongholds of Tolmino and Gorizia; and the attacks of the Alpine troops on Monte Nero gave them possession of the central part of that group, and also of part of the ranges which look down on Tolmino. This struggle went on with good results, though not with accelerating progress, till the autumn; and the same observa-

tion might be made with regard to progress on the eastern side of the Plava bridgehead, which stopped short of the dominating height of Verte.

But whatever progress was made either at Tolmino or at Plava, it always remained subsidiary to advance towards Gorizia, where the difficulties, great indeed, were less those of mountainous terrain than of skilfully constructed Austrian positions, and where, too, a substantial advance must outflank all the Austrian entrenchments and strongholds on the hills. Gorizia was from a military point of view only a name. The importance of winning through there arose from the existence of the plain which is situated there between two shoulders of hills, the southern of which was that of the Carso and its environs, the northern a group designated for convenience by the names Oslavia, Sabotino, Calvario, Podgora. The attack on the three points last named was initiated in July, and part of the slopes were occupied by very hard fighting. At the same time the Italian forces in the southern Carso sector, at length relieved of some



Map showing the Area over which the Italians advanced into Austrian Territory on the Isonzo Front in 1915

part of their difficulties, attacked the ridge between Sagrado and Monfalcone. They made their way up the ridge in July by desperately hard fighting; their centre holding firm at Castello Nuovo, while the wings climbed with desperate slowness inch by inch at Monte San Michele and Monte Sei Busi. They took Monte Sei Busi more than once, and lost it. On July 18 their patient advance developed into a furious onslaught which lasted three days and gave them 3500 prisoners. Then came the Austrian counter-attack, at last beaten back, and leaving another 1500 prisoners behind. Then another Italian thrust, in which a regiment of Bersaglieri reached the crest of San Michele, but had, greatly to their disgust, to be withdrawn. The battle of the Carso lasted with attack and counter-attack till the end of the first week of August. By then the Italians were firmly established on the edge of the plateau. They were nearly at the top of Monte San Michele, and at last they were in indisputable possession of Monte Sei Busi. After that the operations there settled down for some time to the routine of trench work and bomb-throwing.

On October 18, as a last flicker before winter should settle down on the heights, the Italians renewed a vigorous offensive all along their Isonzo front. On Monte Nero the positions were pushed down closer to Tolmino; against Tolmino itself some progress was made on the hills of Santa Maria and Santa Lucia; and a new thrust was made at the Gorizia plain, not from the Carso, where indeed operations still went on, but from the region just north of west. After a memorable struggle the Italians blasted their way to a line which extended from the heights of Sabotino, through the village of Oslavia, to the crest of Mount Podgora and the summit of Mount Calvario. That offensive was conducted with the utmost determination, and the fight, alternating between attack and the beating back of counter-attack, went on almost unbrokenly for six weeks. They established themselves strongly in the little village that lies underneath Mount Podgora, and so looked down into Gorizia, and at one time in November were in complete possession of Mount Sabotino. Up to the end of the year the fighting

Primitive Warfare on the Italian Front: an Austrian device for rolling rocks and boulders down the mountains on to Italian troops

scarcely ceased here; and towards the end of this long struggle they were close to the Gorizia bridge. At last they turned their guns on Gorizia itself, which they could have blown to pieces long before, but had spared till it was evident that the Austrians were making use of this leniency to mount guns in the town itself.

Meanwhile, on the Carso, progress was made on the southern edge towards Doberdo, and on the northern slope a number of trenches were taken and held towards San Martino. At the end of the year the Italians were favourably placed south of Gorizia for their spring campaign; north of it they dominated it from Oslavia. Their operations in the eight months of warfare might have justly been summed

The Duke of Aosta, commanding one of the Italian Armies at the Front

The Duke of Genoa, Uncle of the King of Italy, and his "Lieutenant-General" in His Majesty's absence, at the Front

up by saying that their methodical advance had never been interrupted; that they had immobilized some 800,000 Austrian troops, and occupied their guns; while during these operations the Italian army had captured 30,000 prisoners, 5 guns, 65 machine-guns, and a great quantity of ammunition, rifles, and military stores. The moral and political effect of their operations was far greater. They had played their part in the siege of the Central Powers, and never in any week or month of their campaign had allowed the enemy to withdraw any part of his forces or to weaken his defensive line at any point. Along the sector where the more intensive fighting took place, that of the Isonzo, they held the enemy in much the same fashion that the British in France did their share

of holding up German divisions—a continuous offensive-defensive. That they were able to do so with so much success was the best proof of the solidarity of the Italian people, which from the King downwards were inflexibly determined to prosecute the war. The King was nominally in supreme command, his uncle, Prince Thomas of Savoy, Duke of Genoa, acting as his "lieutenant-general" during his absence at the front; though the actual control of operations was in the hands of General Count Luigi Cadorna with General Count Parro as Chief of Staff. The Second and Third Armies which were then engaged on the great thrusting operations to the east were commanded by General Frugoni and the Duke of Aosta. Generals Brusati and Nava were on the northern front with the Second and Fourth Armies, and General Lequio had the Fifth Army of Alpine troops and Bersaglieri.

E. S. G.

CHAPTER II

THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN—LAST PHASE

(August, 1915–January, 1916)

Major-General de Lisle Succeeds Lord Stopford—Sir Ian Hamilton's Appeal for Reinforcements—Why they could not be sent—Effect on the Gallipoli Campaign—The 29th Division moves to Suvla—Battle of August 21—Superb Advance of Midland Yeomanry—Death of Brigadier-General Kenna, V.C., and Sir J. P. Milbanke, V.C.—General Birdwood's new Advance—The Anzacs' Attack on Hill 60—Anzac and Suvla Firmly Linked — Lieutenant-General Byng Succeeds to Command of 9th Army Corps—Anzac Heroism on Hill 60—Fate of Gallipoli Campaign Sealed—10th Division Transferred to Salonika—Some Brilliant Exploits—The Stories of the *Southland* and the *Mercian*—Sir Ian Hamilton Recalled and Succeeded by Sir Charles Monro—Sir Ian Hamilton's Farewell Order and Final Tributes—Sir Charles Monro Decides for Evacuation—His Reasons—Lord Kitchener's Visit—Closing Incidents of the Campaign—A Disastrous Storm and Blizzard—The Newfoundlanders Win their Spurs—Dashing Advance by the Lowland Territorials—Suvla and Anzac Evacuated—Praise from Sir Charles Monro—Total Losses in Dardanelles—Completing the Evacuation at Helles—Our Last Attack—Final Scenes—The Prime Minister's Tribute.

ALTHOUGH the Suvla Bay advance had plainly miscarried, and the Anzacs had found themselves unable to hold the summit of Sari Bair, Sir Ian Hamilton was confident that with prompt and adequate reinforcements he could still seize the Narrows and win the campaign. Major-General de Lisle, who had been summoned from Cape Helles temporarily to succeed Lord Stopford in the command of the 9th Corps on August 15, was accordingly instructed to make it his most pressing business to get the troops into fighting trim again for a fresh attack upon Ismail Oglu Tepe and the Anafarta Spur, which had held up the advance since the landing on the night of August 6–7. All ranks, however, had suffered severely in the previous operations, so that the 10th (Irish) Division (less

than one brigade), and the 11th (Northern) Division of the New Army, with the 53rd and the 54th Territorial Divisions, all placed at the disposal of the new commander, made a far less imposing force than appeared on paper, totalling, owing to casualties, under 30,000 rifles. When Sir Ian Hamilton

Lieutenant-General Francis J. Davies, K.C.B., commanding the British Troops at Helles
(From a photograph by Gale & Polden)

came to take stock he found that the full fighting strength of the Allies and their foes—as near as this last could be gauged—stood at that time roughly as follows: at Suvla, 30,000; at Anzac, under Lieutenant-General Birdwood, 25,000; and at Helles, under Lieutenant-General Davies, 23,000, the French corps alongside consisting of some 17,000 rifles. The Turkish strength on all fronts was estimated at 110,000, against our total of 95,000. Also the enemy held all the vantages of ground, and knew perfectly well how to make the best use of them. He was known, too, to have plenty of ammunition, and Sir Ian Hamilton was bound to confess that his hopes that the fresh drafts with which his adversaries were always able to refill their ranks would be of inferior quality, had invariably been disappointed.

Having weighed all these points he sent Lord Kitchener his urgent cable, on August 16, pointing out that, if the campaign was to be brought to a quick, victorious conclusion, large reinforcements must be sent to him at once. Autumn, he pointed out, was already upon them, and there was not a moment to be lost.

"At that time", he writes in his dispatch of December 11, "my British divisions alone were 45,000 under establishment, and some of my fine battalions had dwindled down so far that I had to withdraw them from the fighting-line. Our most vital need was the replenishment of these sadly depleted ranks. When that was done I wanted 50,000 fresh rifles. From what I knew of the Turkish situation, both in its local and general aspects, it seemed humanly speaking a certainty that if this help could be sent to me *at once* we could still clear a passage for our fleet to Constantinople. It may be judged, then, how deep was my disappointment when I learnt that the essential drafts, reinforcements, and munitions could not be sent to me, the reason given being one which prevented me from any further insistence."

The reason, as explained in an earlier chapter, was the need then existing for all the available men and munitions for the Allied offensive on the Western front in the following month. The

drain on the military resources of the country, with its simultaneous campaigns on three continents, was, of course, tremendous; and the Home Government's refusal to reinforce Sir Ian at this time was doubtless inevitable; but it sealed the fate of the Gallipoli campaign. It was more as a forlorn hope than anything else, therefore, that Sir Ian renewed the attack on August 21, after reinforcing the northern wing with the 2nd Mounted Division (organized as dismounted troops) from Egypt, and the 29th Division from the southern area. He was faced with the grave possibility, since he could not depend upon receiving reinforcing drafts, that failure in the new attack might involve the loss of all the new ground already won. He decided, therefore, to mass every available man against Ismail Oglu Tepe as a first step towards clearing the Anafarta valley, or, if this proved impossible, towards securing Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove from shell-fire.

The task was infinitely harder now than a fortnight before. All hope of seriously surprising the enemy had vanished. It was well known that he had made the best use of the interval to strengthen every yard of ground in the threatened regions of the north, and that he was ready for any emergency. The chief element of surprise reserved for him was the secret arrival from the southern area of the famous 29th Division, the Old Guard of Gallipoli, heroes of every action at Helles since the famous landing on April 25, and representative of all four countries, England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Hope on our side mainly centred in these well-tried regiments, though very few remained in their ranks of the men who had shared the glory of the landing four months previously—the last of our original Regular Army to take the field. Those ranks had been filled two or three times over in the course of the campaign, but, so inspiring is the force of example, the high traditions of the old 29th had never suffered; and it was felt that if the enemy's lines of communication were to be cut at all these were the troops to do it. So they were shipped in secret at Helles—where they had held their ground since we last saw them, repulsing Turkish counter-attacks while the northern operations were in progress—and landed from trawlers at Suvla Bay.

They shared the honour of the attack on Ismail Oglu Tepe on August 21 with the 11th (Northern) Division of the New Army on their right, the 10th (Irish) Division, and the newly-arrived 2nd Mounted Division, being held in general reserve. Away to their left the 53rd and 54th Territorial Divisions were instructed meantime to hold the enemy from Sulajik to Kiretch Tepe Sirt, General Birdwood at the same time co-operating in the Anzac region to the south by swinging forward his left flank to Susuk Kuyu and Kaiajik Aghala (Hill 60).

Sir Ian Hamilton describes Ismail Oglu Tepe, the hill forming the south-west corner of the Anafarta Sagir spur, which was his special objective on this occasion, as a strong natural barrier against any invader from the Ægean bent on marching direct against the Anafartas:—

"The hill", he writes, "rises 350 feet from the plain, with steep spurs jutting out to the west and south-west, the whole of it covered with dense holly oak scrub, so nearly impenetrable that it breaks up an attack and forces troops to move in single file along goat-tracks between the bushes. The comparatively small number of guns landed up to date was a weakness, seeing we had now to storm trenches, but the battleships were there to back us, and as the bombardment was limited to a narrow front of a mile it was hoped the troops would find themselves able to carry the trenches, and that the impetus of the charge would carry them up to the top of the crest. Our chief difficulty lay in the open nature and shallow depth of the ground available for the concentration for attack. The only cover we possessed was the hill Lala Baba, 200 yards from the sea, and Yilghin Burnu [Chocolate Hill], half a mile from the Turkish front, the ground between these two being an exposed plain."

With the 9th Corps in Gallipoli: removing wounded at Suvla Bay

For this formidable task of storming this Turkish position the 29th Division occupied the front trenches on the night of the 20th, ranged along the line extending from Hill 70 (Scimitar Hill) to Hill 112, the 87th Brigade on the left and the 86th on the right, with the South Wales Borderers in the centre connecting the two. The 88th Brigade was in reserve. The 11th Division, which was to attack on the right of the 29th, occupied the front trenches on the right of Chocolate Hill.

As ill luck would have it, a strange mist crept up during the following day, wrapping Suvla Bay and plain so that the enemy's lines during the afternoon could scarcely be seen. This was the more unfortunate because it had been calculated that the enemy's gunners would be blinded by the declining sun, and the Turkish trenches shown up clearly by the evening light, as would, indeed, have been the case on ninety-nine days out of a hundred. The Commander-in-Chief wished to postpone the attack, but apparently this was not possible; "and so, from 2.30 p.m. to 3 p.m., a heavy but none too accurate artillery bombardment from

land and sea was directed against the Turkish first line, while twenty-four machine-guns in position on Yilghin Burnu did what they could to lend a hand". The infantry attack was begun on the right of the line at 3 p.m. by the 34th Brigade of the 11th Division, which met with immediate success, the Turkish trenches between Hetman Chair and Aire Kavak being carried practically without loss. Unfortunately the 32nd Brigade, losing direction in its advance on the left against Hetman Chair and the communication-trench connecting that point with the south-west corner of the Ismail Oglu Tepe spur, which the 29th Division was attacking, failed to make good its point. The result was disastrous, for though the 32nd Brigade, which, instead of moving east had moved north-east, attempted with the utmost bravery to carry the communication-trench from that direction, it never succeeded in rectifying the original mistake. The capture of this communication-trench was vital to the success of our plans, and the 33rd Brigade was sent up in haste with orders to take it at all costs —only to repeat the fatal mistake of the 32nd, part of it marching north-east and part south-east to Susuk Kuyu.

In the meantime the 29th Division, held back until 3.30, had been launched to the attack on Hill 70. On the left the 87th Brigade carried the trenches on the hill with great dash, but the 86th on the right were checked by a raging forest fire right across their front. Bursting shrapnel from the enemy's guns, which had concentrated their fire all round Yilghin Burnu, or Chocolate Hill, had set fire to bush and scrub in all directions, and the flames had spread with alarming rapidity. When at length the 86th were able to press forward they found it impossible to advance up the valley between the two spurs owing to the failure of the 32nd Brigade on their

Official Photograph

With the Anzacs in Gallipoli: inside an Australian trench

One man is using a periscope rifle while another keeps watch by means of a periscope.

right. They then tried to attack eastwards, but were decimated, says the Commander-in-Chief, by a cross-fire of shell and musketry from the north and south-east. "The leading troops were simply swept off the top of the spur, and had to fall back to a ledge south-west of Scimitar Hill [Hill 70], where they found a little cover." Through no fault of their own, therefore, these magnificent men were forced to admit

failure; yet no troops ever tried harder to achieve the impossible.

One supreme effort was yet to be made to retrieve the fortunes of this luckless day. The 2nd Mounted Division of Yeomanry, which had been held in reserve behind Lala Baba, was moved up in open formation to take up a position in readiness behind Chocolate Hill. The march of these newly-arrived troops, approaching Chocolate Hill in open formation under a remarkably accurate artillery-fire from the enemy's guns, moved Sir Ian Hamilton, and all who witnessed it, to a signal outburst of enthusiasm.

"The advance of these English Yeomen", wrote the Commander-in-Chief, "was a sight calculated to send a thrill of pride through anyone with a drop of English blood running in their veins. Such superb martial spectacles are rare in modern war. Ordinarily it should always be possible to bring up reserves under some sort of cover from shrapnel fire. Here, for a mile and a half, there was nothing to conceal a mouse, much less some of the most stalwart soldiers England has ever sent from her shores. Despite the critical events in other parts of the field, I could hardly take my glasses from the Yeomen; they moved like men marching on parade. Here and there a shell would take toll of a cluster; there they lay; there was no straggling; the others moved steadily on; not a man was there who hung back or hurried. But such an ordeal must consume some of the battle-winning fighting energy of those subjected to it, and it is lucky indeed for the Turks that the terrain, as well as the lack of trenches, forbade us from letting the 2nd Mounted Division loose at close quarters to the enemy without undergoing this previous too heavy baptism of fire."

Having reached their objective these unwavering lines formed up behind the infantry in front of Hill 70. It fell to the 2nd South Midland Brigade, under Brigadier-General the Earl of Longford, to make the last decisive effort to save the day with a final charge up Hill 70, after the South Wales Borderers, advancing late in the afternoon, had dug themselves in beneath the crest. Every available gun had meantime again been concentrated on the defiant heights, the whole horizon, according to Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, who watched the battle from Chocolate Hill, being almost blotted out with vast clouds of smoke and flames as the trees, scrub, homesteads, and the very grass burned furiously in all directions, "while the noise of the guns and the incessant and never-ceasing roar from thousands of rifles rendered the scene a perfect inferno". It was almost dark when Lord Longford's dismounted Yeomanry, consisting of the Bucks, Berks, and Dorsets, leaped to their feet when at last the order came to charge. Bush fires and gusts of rifle and machine-gun fire were encountered without flinching, but the very nature of the obstacles rendered progress in places a matter of inches. On the left the Yeomen advanced as far as the foremost lines of the 29th Division; on the right they also got as far as the leading battalions; and, as soon as it was dark, one regiment, pushing up the valley between Hill 70 and Hill 100 (on Ismail Oglu Tepe), succeeded in carrying the trenches on a small knoll near the centre of that horseshoe.

In the darkness this gallant regiment imagined that it had carried Hill 100 itself, a success which, as Sir

Ian Hamilton explained, would have enabled our line to hang on and dig in. But when the triumphant report first came in, some doubt was felt as to its accuracy, and a reconnaissance by staff officers showed that it was indeed too good to be true. The captured knoll, carried by a brilliant charge at the point of the bayonet, proved to be a good way from Hill 100, a strongly-held semicircle of Turkish trenches still denying us access to the vital summit. The men were too done, and had lost too heavily, says the Commander-in-Chief, to admit of a second immediate assault, and as the knoll actually held would have been swept by the enemy's fire at daybreak, there was no help for it but to fall back under cover of darkness to our original line.

Nothing, however, could dim the glory of the English Yeomen's deeds in this epic battle of August 21, 1915. The Bucks, Berks, and Dorsets were specially mentioned in dispatches for their great gallantry, and a Divisional Order was published at the time expressing the general's intense appreciation of the conduct of all regiments and all ranks in this, their first engagement. It was on this occasion that Private Alfred Potts, of the 1st Berks, earned the distinction of being the first Yeoman to win the V.C. in the Great World War. The Berkshire Yeomen, led by Major E. S. Gooch, late 7th Hussars, carried the Turkish trenches in the final charge with irresistible dash and determination. Major Gooch, the first to reach the enemy's

Drawn by R. Caton Woodville

How the Yeomen won their Spurs at Suvla: the charge of the dismounted men in the battle of August 21, 1915

trenches, fell wounded in the head—to be most bravely defended by Second-Lieutenant H. C. Blyde—and was succeeded in the command by the adjutant, Captain F. B. Hurndall, 20th Hussars, who showed a splendid example of courage and leadership. Private Potts was wounded in the charge, but could have returned to safety under cover of the darkness had he not chosen to stay behind with a private of the same regiment, more severely wounded than himself. Together these two Reading men—for they were fellow-townsmen as well as brothers-in-arms — remained under the precarious shelter of the Turkish trenches for forty-eight hours, never daring to show themselves by day, and sustained only by the water which Potts could find by crawling about at night among the dead bodies and removing their water-bottles. At last they decided, in despair of relief, to make a desperate effort to find their way back to the British lines. Private Andrews, the more seriously wounded man, made a brave attempt to crawl, but had to give it up. Thereupon Potts fixed a shovel to his equipment, and, using this as a sledge, dragged him down the hill bit by bit for over 600 yards, fired at by the Turks on the way, and taking altogether between five and six hours to reach the bottom. Eventually, by great good luck, at about 9.30 p.m. on the 23rd they succeeded in reaching our trenches, where stretchers were promptly found for both soldiers, who had long since been given up for dead.

The Yeomen had to mourn the death of many of their best men in this ill-fated fight. On personal as well as public grounds Sir Ian Hamilton specially deplored the loss of Lord Longford, commanding the 2nd South Midland Brigade, and Brigadier-General P. A. Kenna, V.C., both of whom were killed. Thomas Packenham, fifth Earl of Longford, had served with the

Brigadier-General P. A. Kenna, V.C., killed in the battle of August 21, 1915
(From a photograph by Bassano)

Imperial Yeomanry and Household Cavalry in the South African campaign, and from 1907 to 1911 commanded the 2nd Life Guards. Brigadier-General Kenna won his Victoria Cross in the famous charge of the 21st Lancers at Khartoum in 1898, when he saved the life of Major Crole Wyndham, of the same regiment, by taking him on his horse behind the saddle (Major Wyndham's horse having been killed), returning after the charge to assist

Lieutenant de Montmorency, who was endeavouring to recover the body of Second-Lieutenant R. G. Grenfell. In the South African War General Kenna won the D.S.O., and also distinguished himself in the subsequent campaign in Somaliland.

Another V.C. hero to lose his life in these costly operations was Lieutenant-Colonel Sir J. Peniston Milbanke, Bart., commanding the Nottinghamshire (Sherwood Rangers) Yeomanry, who won his decoration in South Africa in somewhat similar fashion to General Kenna's feat at Khartoum, riding to the rescue of a man whose pony was done up, and, in spite of a galling fire from the Boers, taking him on his own horse and bringing him safely in. He retired from the 10th Hussars at the beginning of 1911, but was appointed to the command of the Sherwood Rangers shortly after the outbreak of the Great War.

Severe though the casualties of the Yeomen had been in the attack of August 21, the losses had fallen most heavily on the war-scarred 29th Division, amounting in all to not far short of 5000. Countless deeds of heroism among the rank and file are recounted, as well as among the officers. When, for instance, all the officers of his own company had been killed or wounded, Sergeant J. Mitchell, of the 2nd South Wales Borderers, entirely on his own responsibility, assembled some 300 men of different units who were also without officers, re-formed the line, and continued the attack against the enemy's position, "displaying the greatest bravery and power of leadership", records the *Gazette*, "and a devotion to duty beyond all praise". He was awarded the D.C.M,, also conferred upon Company Quartermaster-Sergeant Prosser, of the 6th Border Regiment, who risked his life repeatedly when the fires broke out in the scrub and held up the advance, and many wounded were in imminent peril of being burned to death. Under heavy shell- and rifle-fire Quartermaster-Sergeant Prosser rushed into the flames to bring in a wounded officer, who was, however, killed by a second bullet before he could be put into a shelter. He immediately returned and brought in another wounded man, and continued going in and out of the burning scrub to carry others into safety on his back. His total disregard of personal danger was undoubtedly the means of saving many men from an appalling death. The 1st Border Regiment, the 1st Munsters, and the 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers were among the other regiments to share the honours for the battle of the 21st, where all the regiments of the Old Guard, though the task proved too much even for their experienced prowess, fought and died up to the height of their proudest traditions.

The 9th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, who, as already mentioned, lost their commanding officer, Sir J. P. Milbanke, V.C., also earned special mention for their gallant bearing on this day, as well as, in the words of Sir Ian Hamilton's supplementary dispatch, "constantly maintaining stout hearts and a soldierly spirit in despite of the heavy losses they had suffered when carrying out their costly duty of closing the big gap between the left of the Anzac troops and Chocolate Hill

from August 8 to 14". On the 21st this same battalion, together with the 6th Border Regiment, displayed, in the words of the Commander-in-Chief, "a vigorous initiative combined with very steady discipline throughout the attack".[1]

While this new scene was being enacted in the Suvla Bay drama, the

Drawn by S. Begg

Holding the British Lines on Chocolate Hill: repulsing a Turkish attack across the Anafarta plain

Anzacs in the southern theatre were playing a valiant part in support of the main advance, as pre-arranged with General Birdwood. A force including two battalions of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles—the remnants of the gallant corps which had shared the glory of the wild night foray of August 6—two battalions of the 29th Irish Brigade, the 4th South Wales Borderers, and the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, had been placed for the purpose under the command of Major-General H. V. Cox, who divided his men into three sections. The left section was to press forward and establish a permanent hold on the existing lightly-held outpost line linking up the Anzacs with the Suvla Bay corps; the centre section was to seize the well at Kabak Kuyu, "an asset of the utmost value", says Sir Ian Hamilton, "whether to ourselves or the enemy"; and the right section was to capture the Turkish trenches on the north-east side of the Kaiajik Aghala (Hill 60).

The Anzacs watched the opening of the new battle in the northern zone with the interest with which they had

[1] The Sherwood Foresters had reason to be proud of their fine record in the Great World War. Other battalions, as described in Vol. III, Chapter XIV, covered themselves with glory in the grim struggle for the Hohenzollern Redoubt on the Western Front, and sacrificed themselves with equal bravery in the Dublin fighting in the following spring.

followed the first operations after the Suvla landing.

"At two o'clock in the afternoon", wrote Captain Bean, the official Press representative with the Imperial Forces in the Dardanelles, "the British guns began to tear the plain in front of them and the low hills which rise out of it. The plain became an inferno of whirling dust. At three o'clock a sudden roar of musketry showed that the British infantry must be over its parapets and advancing across the plain. Presently you could make them out, line after line of tiny figures coming steadily across the green meadows. But the moment they reached a certain point in the plain the view would be shut out by the low flat hill or knob which formed the most northerly spur of our main range. This spur had never been reached by our troops; our line was drawn on the next spur south of it."

It was to connect up with this spur, and so form a permanent junction with the Suvla corps, that General Cox's left section advanced at 3.30 p.m., meeting with immediate success. The well at Kaba Kuyu was seized by the Indian Brigade after a brisk engagement, and by 4.30 the right column, under Brigadier-General Russell, effected a lodgment on Hill 60, where our men entrenched, and began to dig communications across the Kaiajik Dere towards the lines of the 4th Australian Brigade south of the Dere, where the survivors of some 300 men, sent down the gulley to assault the trench on the opposite side, and cut to pieces by the murderous fire, had dug themselves in within sight

Official Photograph

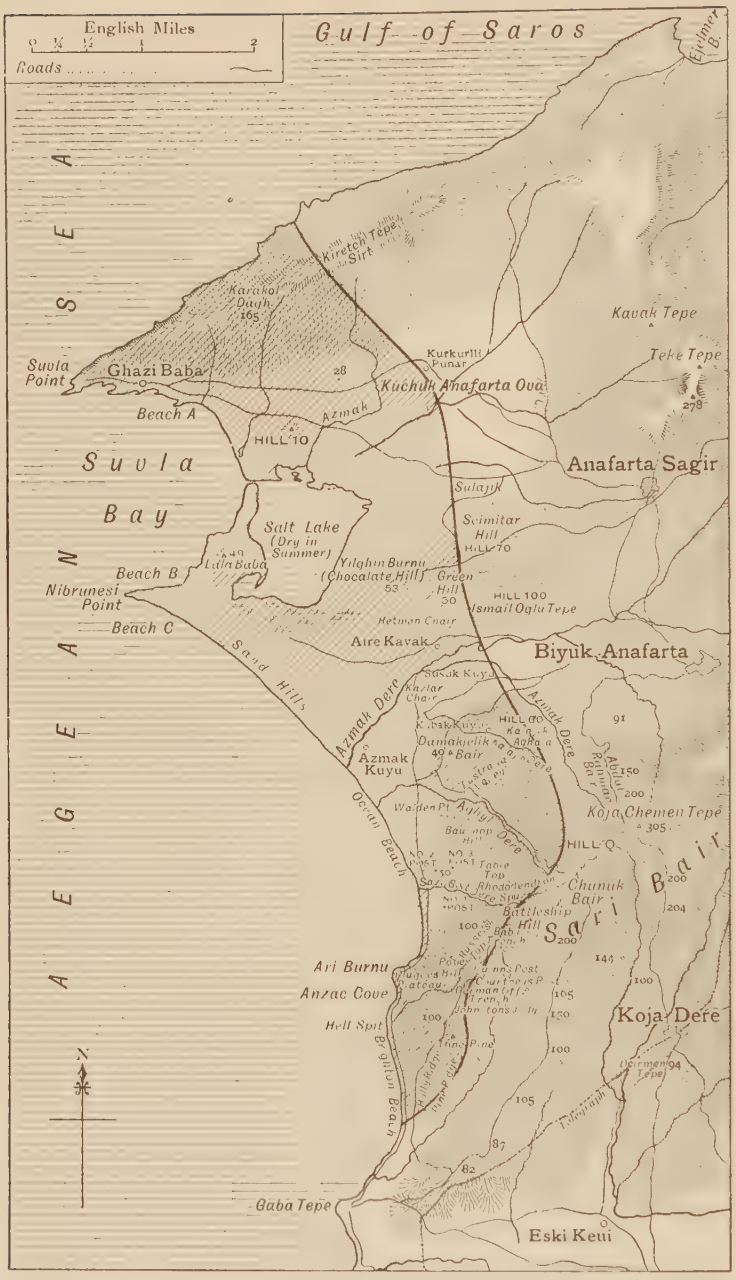
Battlefields of the Northern Zone: view across the country towards Suvla Bay from the heights of Anzac

of the enemy. The New Zealand Mounted Rifles had reached their objective by a dashing advance over three ridges under heavy fire, finally carrying part of the Turkish trenches round Hill 60, and holding on in spite of a galling enfilade fire from the enemy. Meantime the Connaught Rangers had been distinguishing themselves in the advance on the well and trenches at Kabak Kuyu, Second-Lieutenant W. G. Johnson, who had shown the greatest personal bravery during the attack on Lone Pine on August 8, now winning the Military Cross for leading his men in the most dashing manner into the enemy's positions, where, in the words of the official record, he bayoneted seven Turks with his own hands.

Russell's troops in their lodgment on the slopes of Hill 60 succeeded in holding their own through the night in the face of superior force and heavy bombing attacks. At 6 a.m. the next morning the newly-arrived 18th Battalion of Australians was launched into the fray with the ugly task of carrying the northern Turkish communications. Hill 60 was a maze of formidable trenches right down the slopes facing the Anzac positions, with an egg-shaped inner circle near the summit, and an outer redoubt extending right round part of the reverse slope, and linked up with the trenches lining the spur and the plain beyond. It was the topmost line of this position that General Russell now attacked with the newly-landed Australians. Charging through the scrub in rare style in the early dawn of that 22nd of August the men carried 150 yards of trench, forming part of the wide outer circle of the redoubt.

"The trench", writes Captain Bean, "lay open to Turks as does a furrow when you look down into it from the slope of the opposite hill, and they poured into it such a hail of machine-gun fire and shrapnel that the men were driven out of the part that was over the northern slope. During the day the Turks crept up on both sides of the trench and bombed it from half-made trenches of their own, whose direction they knew, while it was unknown to us."

There was nothing for it, therefore, but to fall back, after cruel and unavailing losses. Meanwhile, however, the New Zealand Mounted Rifles had succeeded, in spite of repeated counter-attacks, in making good another 80 yards. The only way to deal with the Turks, as one of these mounted men wrote at the time to the present writer, was to get among them with the bayonet and bomb, at the risk of finding that enfilade fire made the captured position untenable. At the close of the day on the 22nd a number of detached parties of these dashing New Zealanders were scattered in advance of the fire trenches, and in the darkness did not know how to get back. The firing was still very heavy, and Turks were lurking in every direction. Sapper A. L. Caselberg, of the Signal Troop of the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade, went out several times on his own initiative, searched for his stranded compatriots, and guided them back on each occasion, thus earning his well-merited D.C.M. In the furious hand-to-hand fighting in this advance the same decoration was won by Trooper H. Pidgeon, of the Canter-



The Suvla and Anzac Line: map showing approximately by the shaded portion the area occupied after the linking up of the two armies in August, 1915

bury Mounted Rifles, who, besides performing gallant work in rescuing some of the wounded under fire, refused to retire when wounded himself, continuing at his post of danger with the greatest bravery and determination until wounded a second time. The way these New Zealanders fought was further exemplified in the case of Trooper D. J. O'Connor, of the same regiment, who also received the D.C.M.

"While returning to his regiment after being slightly wounded", says the *Gazette*, "he passed another regiment which was being heavily shelled. Without hesitation he entered the shell-swept zone and carried in two wounded men. He went out again, and helped a wounded officer to a place of comparative safety. His bravery and devotion were the more noticeable in that these gallant acts were quite outside his duty."

The new line, from the slopes of Hill 60 to Susuk Kuyu, where the right flank of the 9th Corps were holding out a hand to their Anzac comrades, was gradually strengthened. Eventually it joined on firmly to the right of the Suvla army, thus, as Sir Ian Hamilton remarks, materially improving the whole situation. In the course of this action

the 4th Australian Brigade, facing the Turks on the upper slopes of Hill 60, took vengeance for the losses among the 18th Battalion by inflicting some hundreds of casualties among the Turks as they retreated or endeavoured to reinforce.

All ranks, says Sir Ian Hamilton, were eager for a renewal of the offensive, but the Commander-in-Chief, knowing only too well that reinforcements and munitions were short, and would become shorter still, and that a serious outbreak of sickness had still further reduced his strength, realized the imperative necessity of husbanding his resources by giving a spell of rest to the men who had been fighting so magnificently and so continuously. Progress was accordingly suspended.

Lieutenant-General the Hon. Sir J. H. G. Byng, K.C.B., who succeeded to the command of the 9th Army Corps at Suvla

(From a photograph by Bassano)

Work was put in hand to strengthen the line from Suvla to Anzac; a minor offensive routine of sniping and bombing was organized. "In a word," writes Sir Ian in his dispatch, "trench warfare set in on both sides."

Two days later—on August 24—the command of the 9th Army Corps at Suvla was taken over by Lieutenant-General the Hon. Sir J. H. G. Byng, seventh son of the second Earl of Strafford, late General Officer Commanding in Egypt, who served with the 10th Royal Hussars in the Sudan and South African wars, and had subsequently held, among other appointments, the command of the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades, the East Anglian Division.

The end of August, 1915, when the Anzac troops were sufficiently rested, brought the last of their battle incidents in the history of the Gallipoli campaign. Its object was to complete the capture of Hill 60, the somewhat flat summit of which, overlooking the Biyuk Anafarta valley, was a tactical position of the first importance. Major-General Cox was again entrusted with the conduct of the attack, the troops at his disposal being detachments of the 4th and 5th Australian Brigades, the 5th Connaught Rangers, and the New Zealand Rifle Brigade—still holding the positions they had captured on the 21st and 22nd. The eve of this fresh advance was marked by an incident which, though it has no bearing on the subsequent operations, deserves its due share in New Zealand's roll of honour. It became known that some of the Dominion's men had been isolated within the enemy's lines for

fifteen days, whereupon Private F. Mahoney, of the Wellington Battalion, volunteered to go to their rescue. "It was a mission of great difficulty and danger," says the *Gazette* in recording Private Mahoney's award of the D.C.M., "and by his coolness and knowledge of scouting he greatly contributed to the success of the search and ultimate rescue of the missing men."

Some of the Royal New Zealand Artillery gave an equally thrilling display of absolute fearlessness during the fresh advance of the 27th, which was preceded during the afternoon by the heaviest bombardment we could afford. Major Ivon T. Standish, of No. 3 Battery, was controlling the fire of an extremely exposed section when one of his guns was put out of action by a direct hit from the enemy, and his ammunition-pit, containing over fifty high-explosive shells, became surrounded by blazing brushwood. At once leaving his observing-station, Major Standish, who subsequently received the D.S.O., ran to the pit and personally assisted in extinguishing the fire. Second-Lieutenant Robert M'Pherson earned the Military Cross for assisting in the same dangerous work, going down into the pit after one slight explosion had already taken place, the D.C.M. being also awarded to Sergeant C. J. K. Edwards and Driver N. Clark, of the same battery, who volunteered to carry water to put out the fire, and were successful in doing so.

While this breathless incident was taking place the attack on the summit of Hill 60 was in full swing. The preliminary bombardment had seemed effective enough, "but the moment the assailants broke cover", writes Sir Ian Hamilton, "they were greeted by an exceeding hot fire from the enemy field-guns, rifles, and machine-guns, followed after a brief interval by a shower of heavy shell, some of which, most happily, pitched into the trenches of the Turks". Captain Bean describes the central attack as in three lines, with the Auckland and Canterbury Mounted Rifles in the first, the Otago and Wellington in the second, and the 18th Australian Battalion in the third. The Connaughts were on their left and the 4th Australian Brigade on their right. Within ten minutes the New Zealanders, with the 18th Battalion behind them, had captured the first trench, which was crowded with Turks, and then swept on from trench to trench in a most determined onslaught carrying one side of the topmost knoll after hand-to-hand fighting which lasted until 9.30 p.m., when the report came down that nine-tenths of the summit had been gained. On the left the 250 men of the 5th Connaught Rangers, attacking the trenches from which the 18th Australians had been driven nearly a week before, had charged with a swiftness and cohesion which, as Sir Ian bears witness, excited the admiration of all beholders.

"In five minutes", he adds, "they had carried their objective, the northern Turkish communications, when they at once set to and began a lively bomb-fight along the trenches against strong parties which came hurrying up from the enemy supports and afterwards from their reserves. At midnight fresh troops were to have strengthened

our grip upon the hill, but before that hour the Irishmen had been out-bombed, and the 9th Australian Light Horse, who had made a most plucky attempt to recapture the lost communication-trench, had been repulsed. Luckily, the New Zealand Mounted Rifles refused to recognize that they were worsted. Nothing would shift them. All that night and all next day, through bombing, bayonet charges, musketry, shrapnel, and heavy shell, they hung on to their 150 yards of trench."

August 29 came, and with it, at 1 a.m. a memorable charge of the 10th Australian Light Horse, who, making another attack on the lost communication-trenches from our captured positions in the interior lines, succeeded not only in carrying them but also in holding them in the face of repeated counter-attacks, the 9th Australian Light Horse working along the communication-trench to meet them. Hand-to-hand fighting for this hotly-disputed line lasted for thirty-seven hours, when the Turks were at length forced to acknowledge defeat. Second-Lieutenant Hugo V. H. Throswell, of the 10th Light Horse, won his Victoria Cross in this desperate affair. Although severely wounded in several places during one of the counter-attacks, he refused to leave his post, or to obtain medical assistance, until all danger was over; and then, having had his wounds dressed, returned to the firing-line until ordered out of action by the medical officer. "By his personal courage and example", says the *Gazette*, "he kept up the spirits of his party and was largely instrumental in saving the situation at a critical period." Lance-Corporal MacNee gave another fine exhibition of the highest courage. Although wounded he retired from the front line for a time only sufficient to have his wound dressed, and then at once returned, remaining in the firing-line until wounded a second time. He received the D.C.M., also won on the same occasion by Sergeant W. J. Henderson, who proved as untiring as undaunted throughout the long ordeal, rendering invaluable assistance to his commanding officer. When this officer was wounded and ordered away, Sergeant Henderson remained to hold an important section of the captured line with one other man only; and volunteered to stay on when, finally, relief

Second-Lieutenant H. V. H. Throswell, who won the V.C. in the attack of the 10th Australian Light Horse on August 29, 1915

arrived, thus remaining in the trench the full thirty-seven hours during which the fight continued to rage at the closest quarters. Trooper T. B. Stanley, also of the 10th Light Horse, was similarly decorated for setting a conspicuous example throughout the same ordeal.

It only remains to tell of the tragic part played on the right by the 4th Australian Brigade. According to Captain Bean, the preliminary bombardment never reached the Turkish trench on the spur facing this force, which sent out its assaulting party in three lines of a hundred each, including one hundred lent by the 17th Australian Battalion. Charging as one man they ran straight into a terrible fire. "Every officer", writes Captain Bean, "was either killed or wounded, and so were practically the whole of the men, except a small party which managed to get into the Turkish trench alongside the New Zealanders."

Costly though it was, the combined success of the Australians and New Zealanders gave us at last complete command of an outlook from Hill 60 over the Anafarta-Sagir valley, and safer lateral communications between Anzac and Suvla Bay. Our casualties amounted to about 1000, the Imperial forces necessarily suffering the heaviest losses. Among the New Zealand Mounted Rifles the Canterburys alone lost between 80 and 90 per cent of their men. Yet the total Turkish losses were out of all proportion heavier than ours.

Official Photograph

Campaigning Days in Gallipoli: Anzac Cove, August, 1915

Their line of retreat being commanded from our Kaiajik Dere trenches, our observers were thence able to direct a destructive artillery fire both upon their fugitives and their reinforcements. These observers estimated the enemy's casualties at no less than 5000. Forty-six prisoners were also taken, as well as 3 Turkish machine-guns, 3 trench mortars, 300 rifles, 60,000 rounds of ammunition, and 500 bombs. Throughout the operations, says Sir Ian, Major-General Cox "showed his usual forethought and wisdom", and Brigadier-General Russell fought his men splendidly.

The 400 acres thus added to the territories of Anzac afforded welcome elbow-room and secured the connections with the 9th Army Corps, our new line now giving us practical possession from the cliffs overlooking the Gulf of Saros above Suvla Bay almost to Gaba Tepe. Unhappily, with this achievement to illumine the last days of August, 1915, the paralysis set in which irrevocably sealed the fate of the whole expedition. The flow of munitions and drafts fell away; and the days of the Great Adventure were numbered.

"Sickness, the legacy of a desperately trying summer," writes the Commander-in-Chief towards the mournful end of his historic dispatch, "took heavy toll of the survivors of so many arduous conflicts. No longer was there any question of operations on the grand scale, but with such troops it was impossible to be downhearted. All ranks were cheerful; all remained confident that, so long as they stuck to their guns, their country would stick to them, and see them victoriously through the last and greatest of the crusades."

Unfortunately, the general military position of the Allies in the Great World War rendered victory hopeless, even had it still been possible to carry the Peninsula, which Sir Ian Hamilton's successor denied, as will presently be seen. In any case it was impossible to send the necessary reinforcements. The September offensive on the Western front had not achieved all that had been hoped from it, and the cost had been terrific. The situation in the Balkans necessitated a Franco-British landing at Salonika, the 10th (Irish) Division of the New Army being transferred from Suvla for that purpose early in October, under Lieutenant-General Sir Bryan Mahon. Sickness, as Sir Ian Hamilton said, had also sadly thinned the ranks of the Gallipoli Force, and it became obvious that the longer we held on under those conditions the worse our position in Gallipoli would become. It subsequently transpired that of our total of 127,000 casualties in this campaign between May 25 and October 30, 1915, over 90,000 were cases of dysentery and other sickness. The average at that time was about 750 per day, and though 80 per cent of them returned to the fighting ranks the wastage and disorganization would in any case have been a heavy handicap to the military operations.

Progress was therefore painfully slow while the Expeditionary Force anxiously awaited its fate after the battles of August. During the whole of September none of the fighting was on a scale calling for special reports, though every day had its minor enterprises. The net result of the month's

operations was the gain of an average of a little over 300 yards along the whole centre — four miles — of the Suvla front. But in this bald summary of indecisive results lies hidden a whole host of heroic if isolated feats of arms. None could afford to relax the ceaseless vigilance of the fighting line. Bombing and intermittent artillery fire, with the never-ending danger from the hidden sniper, and occasional attacks and counter-attacks for point of vantage, rendered the month of September, 1915, anything but an uneventful chapter in the history of the doomed campaign. Captain Alexander Findlater, M.D., of the 1st (Territorial) London Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, won the D.S.O. on the 29th (after distinguishing himself on several previous occasions) when he crossed over 200 yards of open ground under very heavy shell fire to render aid to two wounded men. He saved the life of one, but the other was beyond help. He was bravely accompanied by Corporal W. G. Muir, who received the D.C.M.

One of the outstanding deeds was that performed on September 9 by Captain Hansen, the adjutant of the 6th Lincolnshires, who, only a month previously, had won the Victoria Cross for saving wounded men from certain death in the burning scrub during the renewed advance after the Suvla Bay landing. On the present occasion he added the Military Cross to his decorations by a hazardous reconnaissance of the coast to locate a Turkish gun which was causing great damage. Stripping himself for the task, and carrying only a revolver and a blanket for disguise, he swam and scrambled over the rocks towards his objective, severely cut and bruised as he did so, but obtaining much valuable information, and also locating the offending gun. After several narrow escapes on land—on one occasion meeting a patrol of twelve Turks, who, fortunately, did not see him, and on another a single Turk, whom he killed—he succeeded in returning safely to our lines, but in a state of great exhaustion.

A Naval Officer's Exploit in the Sea of Marmora: Lieutenant D'Oyly-Hughes, R.N., with his raft in the water

The raft contains the charge for blowing up the railway line, and the officer's accoutrements and clothes.

Captain Hansen's feat was on a par with the brilliant exploit of Lieutenant

Guy D'Oyly-Hughes, R.N., during the previous month, when that officer won the D.S.O. for voluntarily swimming to the shore alone from a submarine in the Sea of Marmora, and blowing up a brickwork support to the Ismid railway line, in spite of the presence of an armed guard within 150 yards of him. The official story of this enterprise reads more like a chapter from Captain Marryat than from official Admiralty dispatches. It tells how Lieutenant D'Oyly-Hughes, who, earlier in the summer, had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his share in other daring submarine work in the Sea of Marmora, dropped into the water on this occasion and swam to the shore, pushing a raft carrying the charge with which he meant to make his attempt on the railway, and his clothes and accoutrements. His weapons consisted of an automatic service revolver and a sharpened bayonet. He also carried an electric torch and a whistle, so that, if he succeeded in returning, he could sound a signalling blast on swimming back in the darkness. After covering the sixty yards which separated the boat from the shore the lieutenant landed safely, only to find the cliffs at that point unscaleable. There was nothing for it but to re-launch the raft and swim along the coast till a less precipitous spot was reached.

"Here, after a stiff climb," continues the official report of the commanding officer of the submarine, "he arrived at the top, and half an hour later, after a considerable advance, reached the railway line. He then proceeded very slowly with the charge towards the viaduct. Having advanced some 500 or 600 yards, voices were heard ahead, and shortly afterwards three men were observed sitting by the side of the line talking quite loudly. After watching them for some time, he decided to leave the charge, which was very heavy and cumbersome, and go forward, making a wide detour inland, to inspect the viaduct.

"This detour was successfully carried out, the only incident being an unfortunate fall into a small farmyard, disturbing the poultry, but not rousing the household. From a distance of about 300 yards the viaduct could easily be seen, as there was a fire burning at the near end of it. A stationary engine could be heard on or just beyond the viaduct, and men were moving about incessantly. He decided that it was impossible to destroy the viaduct, so he returned to the demolition charge, and looked for a convenient spot to blow up the line. He found a low brickwork support over a small hollow and placed it underneath. Unfortunately it was not more than 150 yards from the three men sitting by the line, but there was no other spot where so much damage could be done."

Though he had muffled the fuse pistol to deaden the sound, the noise was loud enough on that still night to rouse the men, who at once started running down the line towards him. Beating a hasty retreat, Lieutenant D'Oyly-Hughes turned and fired two shots at his pursuers, who promptly fired back, but none of the shots on either side, apparently, proved effectual, and the chase was resumed more desperately than ever. It was impossible in the time to return down the cliffs at his place of ascent, so, outdistancing his pursuers, he followed the railway line for about a mile till it brought him close to the shore, and there plunged into the water just as the demolition charge exploded. Those

waiting anxiously on the boat all this time not only heard the explosion, but also had proof that the charge had done its work well by fragments falling in the sea close by, though the distance between the boat and the broken line was nearly half a mile.

But there was nothing to be seen of the daring lieutenant, who, unknown to those in the boat, had struck out from the shore about three-quarters of a mile to the eastward. He swam straight out to sea for 400 or 500 yards, and then, as arranged, blew a long blast on his whistle; but the sound failed to reach the submarine, which was lying in a small bay round the cliffs.

"Day was breaking very rapidly," continues the official report, "so after swimming back to the shore and resting for a short time on the rocks, he commenced swimming towards the bay in which the boat was lying. At this point he discarded his pistol, bayonet, and electric torch, their weight making his progress very slow. It was not until he had rounded the last point that the whistle was heard, and at the same time he heard shouts from the cliffs overhead and rifle fire was opened on the boat. As the boat came astern out of the bay the early morning mist made her appear to him to be three small rowing boats, the bow, the gun, and the conning tower being the objects actually seen. He swam ashore and tried to hide under the cliffs, but on climbing a few feet out of the water he realized his mistake and shouted again before entering the water. We picked him up in an extremely exhausted condition about 40 yards from the rocks, after he had swum the best part of a mile in his clothes."

Deeds like this, as Mr. Asquith said in referring to the sterling work of the submarines in the Sea of Marmora, showed how the old spirit of the British Navy, its adventure, its gallantry, its resource, pervaded those who served throughout these operations, just as much as it did under Drake, Hood, and Nelson. Incidentally it was then announced that British submarines in the same dangerous waters had succeeded, up to October 26, 1915, in sinking or damaging two enemy battleships, five gunboats, one torpedo-boat, eight transports, and no fewer than 197 supply ships of all kinds. That, added Mr. Asquith, was a wonderful chapter in the history of the British Navy. The coming of the German submarines in the Mediterranean in May had, of course, added an enormous danger to the situation, but the Navy showed itself equal to it:—

"Safe harbours were selected and prepared, where ships could run in securely. Small craft were assembled in great numbers to maintain the communications of the Army. And, finally, a number of specially-constructed vessels, largely due to the inventive genius of Lord Fisher himself, which had been built by the Admiralty in anticipation of such requirements as this, went out to the Mediterranean, and have done from that day to this most magnificent work. The Navy throughout this campaign has risen superior to all difficulties, and has been able to maintain the communications of the Army intact."

The submarine problem off Gallipoli was largely solved by the arrival of the torpedo-proof monitors, which played an important rôle in the Suvla Bay landing and later operations. Stationed along the coast, some of them with 14-inch guns capable of hurling three-quarters of a ton about 15 miles, they kept the Turks in check at many vital

points. The big monitors, little more than floating platforms, with sides bulging out just below the surface some 10 feet from the hull, caused the biggest sensation of all the strange craft which somehow found their way to Gallipoli in those days. Some of these newcomers, wobbling along, in the words of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, "like a huge goose primed for Michaelmas"; with smaller monitors looking more like Chinese pagodas than ships, and 25-year-old cruisers such as the *Endymion* and *Theseus* given a new lease of life with a protecting waist-belt like those which guarded the monitors, probably caused the enemy a good deal of amusement at first, but they spoke eloquently enough, and gave the lie to the enemy's boasts that his submarines had wrested from us the command of the seas.

One of the inevitable losses from the attacks of these submarines, the sinking of the transport *Southland* on September 2, 1915, will be remembered for all time, like the loss of the *Birkenhead*, for its inspiring exhibition of coolness, courage, and discipline. There were Australians and New Zealanders on board on their way to Anzac, and when the *Southland* was torpedoed, about 10.15 a.m., and the orders came in quick succession, "Ship sinking!" "Abandon ship!" they went to their stations not only without a trace of panic, but as though rejoicing in the opportunity of showing that the spirit of Anzac was the same on sea as on shore. An artillery officer present on board, in describing this thrilling scene in a letter published in the *Times*, said that words failed to say how magnificent, how fine, they were, as they marched to their stations, lowered their allotted boats with order and care, and took their places, the injured going in first:—

> "Never can men have faced death with greater courage, more nobility, and with a braver front than did the Australian and New Zealand troops on board the s.s. *Southland*. The song they sang was, 'Australia will be there!' and, by Heaven! they were. They were heroes. We knew they were brave in a charge, but now we know they are heroes. Long live in honour and glory the men of the 21st and 23rd Australian Infantry."

A similar episode stands to the eternal credit of the 1/1st Lincolnshire Yeomanry, whose steadfast behaviour during the submarine attack on the transport *Mercian* on November 3 was the subject of a laudatory Order from the Army Council to the General Officer Commanding the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. On the call being sounded, as soon as the hostile submarine was sighted, the troops fell in at their appointed places as if on parade, though the enemy began shelling at once. Excellent discipline was maintained throughout the attack, which lasted nearly an hour and a half, in the course of which the ship was struck by about thirty shells, and six officers and seventy other ranks were killed or wounded. Thanks very largely to the splendid seamanship of Captain J. E. Walker, commanding the transport, the attack was defeated. All ranks of the Lincolns were commended for their coolness and soldierly behaviour throughout the action. One member of the corps, Private E. Thompson,

a native of Horncastle, was rewarded with the D.C.M. for his courage and initiative in meeting an emergency at the wheel, relieving Captain Walker, who had been obliged to steer the ship himself. This resourceful yeoman remained at the wheel most gallantly

Kaye, in assisting with the machine-gun when its officer, Lieutenant J. W. Wintringham, was wounded.

The authorities at home must already have seriously considered the advisability of evacuating Gallipoli, but apparently it was not until early

Official Photograph.

A Dardanelles Idyll: Australian giving a drink of water to a Turkish peasant woman above Anzac Cove

until the attack was over. The Regimental Chaplain, the Rev. C. F. J. Holmes, was also mentioned in the Army Council's Order for his act of bravery in picking up an unexploded shell which had fallen on the bridge and throwing it overboard, the Medical Officer also distinguishing himself in attending to the wounded under fire, and Second Lieutenant G. L. Lister-

October that they discussed such an eventuality with Sir Ian Hamilton. On October 11 Lord Kitchener cabled for an estimate of the losses which would be involved in a withdrawal from the peninsula. Sir Ian replied on the following day in terms showing that such a step was to him unthinkable. Four days later he received another cable recalling him to London,

for the reason, as Lord Kitchener informed him on his arrival, "that His Majesty's Government desired a fresh, unbiased opinion, from a responsible Commander, upon the question of an early evacuation". His successor was General Sir Charles C. Monro, pending the arrival of whom Lieutenant-General Sir W. R. Birdwood was appointed temporarily to command the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, or "Dardanelles Army" as it was presently to be called, the original Mediterranean Expeditionary Force being divided in two—the Dardanelles Army, with its head-quarters at Imbros, and the "Salonika Army", under Sir Bryan Mahon, with head-quarters at Salonika. Before his departure Sir Ian Hamilton, on October 17, issued the following Farewell Order to the troops:—

"On handing over the command of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force to Sir Charles Monro, the Commander-in-Chief wishes to say a few farewell words to the Allied troops, with many of whom he has now for so long been associated. First, he would like them to know his deep sense of the honour it has been to command so fine an army in one of the most arduous and difficult campaigns which have ever been undertaken, and, secondly, he must express to them his admiration at the noble response they have invariably given to the calls he has made upon them. No risk has been too desperate, no sacrifice too great. Sir Ian Hamilton thanks all ranks, from generals to private soldiers, for the wonderful way they seconded his efforts to lead them towards a decisive victory, which under their new chief he has the most implicit confidence they will achieve."

In his dispatch of December 11 he also paid touching tribute "to the everlasting memory of my dear comrades who will return no more", and again thanked all ranks for their unfailing loyalty, patience, and self-sacrifice. "Our progress", he added, "was constant, and if it was painfully slow—they know the truth." Then he bade them all a final farewell, "with a special God-speed to the campaigners who have served with me right through from the terrible yet most glorious earlier days—the incomparable 29th Division; the young veterans of the Naval Division; the ever-victorious Australians and New Zealanders; the stout East Lancs, and my own brave fellow-countrymen of the Lowland Division of Scotland".

Ever ready to acknowledge the services of all ranks in generous terms, Sir Ian made suitable amends to various formations which hitherto had escaped their share of recognition and rewards. Much, as he said, might be written on the exploits of the Royal Naval Air Service, "but these bold flyers are laconic, and their feats will mostly pass unrecorded". There was a fine example of their magnificent nerve and gallantry a few weeks later which, though it takes us rather far afield—to Ferrijik Junction, in Thrace—illustrates their daring work throughout the Eastern campaign. On this occasion Squadron-Commander Richard B. Davies, D.S.O., and Flight Sub-Lieutenant Gilbert F. Smylie, both of the Royal Naval Air Service, were carrying out an air attack on Ferrijik Junction, when Sub-Lieutenant Smylie's machine was brought down by heavy fire. As he fell he planed

down over the station and released all his bombs except one—which failed to drop—simultaneously at the station. He was flying very low by that time, but continued his descent to a neighbouring marsh. On alighting he saw the unexploded bomb and set fire to his machine, knowing that the bomb would ensure its destruction; and then proceeded towards the Turkish frontier. At this moment he saw Squadron-Commander Davies descending—obviously to his rescue—and fearing that he would alight near the burning machine, and thus risk destruction from the bomb, he rushed back, and from a short distance exploded the bomb by means of a pistol bullet. Squadron-Commander Davies, descending at a safe distance from the flames, then took up the stranded officer, in spite of the near approach of a party of the enemy, and returned to the aerodrome —"a feat of airmanship", says the *Gazette*, in announcing the award of the Victoria Cross to Squadron-Commander Davies, and the Distinguished Service Cross to Sub-Lieutenant Smylie, "that can seldom have been equalled for skill and gallantry".

For their services over Gallipoli throughout the campaign, Sir Ian Hamilton had cause to thank these fearless flyers, who, under their commander, Colonel F. H. Sykes, of the Royal Marines, appeared to affront danger and death, when and where they could, with a nonchalance which quickened the hearts of their observers both on land and sea—"an asset of greater military value", writes Sir Ian, "even than their bombs or aerial reconnaissances, admirable in all respects as these were". With them he coupled the dauntless French flyers of the Service de l'Aviation of the Corps Expéditionnaire d'Orient, "who daily wing their way in and out of the shrapnel under the distinguished leadership of M. le Capitaine Césari".

The Armoured Car Division, which had done grand work both on the Western front and in South-West Africa since its origin as an adjunct of the Royal Naval Air Service, had also fully earned the retiring Commander-in-Chief's eulogy for their share in the Gallipoli campaign. The Armoured Car Division, he wrote, never failed to respond to any call which might be made upon them. "Their organization was broken up; their work had to be carried out under strange conditions—from the bows of the *River Clyde*, as independent batteries attached to infantry divisions, &c.—and yet they were always cheerful, always ready to lend a hand in any sort of fighting that might give them a chance of settling old scores with the enemy." They lost heavily both in officers and men, but abundantly proved their worth. Among their fallen officers was the Hon. Charles A. Lister, second and only surviving son and heir of Lord Ribblesdale, and nephew of Mr. Asquith. Mr. Lister, who was not quite 28, had created something of a sensation years before, when he declared himself a Socialist; and he was a member of the Independent Labour Party until an attack on his family caused him to send in his resignation. His death removed the last heir to the barony, and was a cruel blow to a house which had

already paid the price of war in full. His elder brother, Captain the Hon. T. Lister, D.S.O., had been killed in Somaliland in 1904, and his brother-in-law, Captain Percy Wyndham, Coldstream Guards, had fallen in France in the early months of the Great War.

The Royal Artillery, who had earned the unstinted admiration of all their

Brigadier-General R. Whyte Melville Jackson
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry)

comrade services "by their thundering good shooting and hundreds of deeds of daring"; and the stretcher-bearers, whose bravery and devotion were on everyone's lips, were also accorded their well-earned niches in the Dardanelles record of fame. In an earlier dispatch the Commander-in-Chief had acknowledged the services of the Army Service Corps, under Brigadier-General F. W. B. Koe, and the Army Ordnance Corps, under Brigadier-General R. W. M. Jackson, who "made it a point of honour to feed men, animals, guns, and rifles in the fighting line as regularly as if they were only out for manœuvres in Salisbury Plain." He now testified to the admirable work of Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) E. A. Altham, C.B., C.M.G., Inspector-General of Communications, and all the departments and services of the lines of communication, in assuring the troops "a life-giving flow of drafts, munitions, and supplies".

It did not take Sir Charles Monro long after his arrival on the Peninsula to be convinced that a complete evacuation was the only reasonable course to adopt. He pointed out in his dispatch that the positions occupied by our troops presented a military situation unique in history:—

"The mere fringe of the coast-line had been secured. The beaches and piers upon which they depended for all requirements in personnel and material were exposed to registered and observed artillery fire. Our entrenchments were dominated almost throughout by the Turks. The possible artillery positions were insufficient and defective. The force, in short, held a line possessing every possible military defect. The position was without depth, the communications were insecure and dependent on the weather. No means existed for the concealment and deployment of fresh troops destined for the offensive—whilst the Turks enjoyed full powers of observation, abundant artillery positions, and they had been given the time to supplement the natural advantages which the position presented by all the devices at the disposal of the field engineer."

The troops had suffered, too, he pointed out, from the lack of any place possible to withdraw them from the

shell-swept area for rest, as well as from the diseases endemic in that part of Europe in the summer. Makeshifts, which did not tend to create efficiency, had been necessary in order to maintain the numbers needed at the front. Finally, Sir Charles put forward the following arguments as irrefutable in their conclusions:—

"(*a*) It was obvious that the Turks could hold us in front with a small force and prosecute their designs on Bagdad or Egypt, or both.

"(*b*) An advance from the positions we held could not be regarded as a reasonable military operation to expect.

"(*c*) Even had we been able to make an advance in the Peninsula, our position would not have been ameliorated to any marked degree, and an advance on Constantinople was quite out of the question.

"(*d*) Since we could not hope to achieve any purpose by remaining on the Peninsula, the appalling cost to the nation involved in consequence of embarking on an Overseas Expedition with no base available for the rapid transit of stores, supplies, and personnel, made it urgent that we should divert the troops locked up on the Peninsula to a more useful theatre."

Seeing, therefore, no military advantage whatever in remaining on the Peninsula, he telegraphed to the War Minister that in his opinion evacuation was the only course to pursue.

Sir Charles Monro was followed to Gallipoli by Lord Kitchener himself,

The War Minister's Visit to Anzac: Lord Kitchener returns to the beach after inspecting the firing-line

who went to examine the situation on the spot in the course of a mission to the whole Eastern theatre of war. The War Minister visited Mudros, Helles, and Anzac; held conferences with the new Commander-in-Chief;

and met all the leading officers, including the Australian and New Zealand divisional commanders and brigadiers. His landing at Anzac was unannounced, but the news of his arrival spread like wildfire among the troops, who almost tumbled over one another, says Reuter's correspondent, in their eagerness to reach the beach in time. There they gave him a mighty cheer of welcome, and in reply he told them how deeply the King had appreciated their magnificent services. Thence he strode up the steepest paths to the firing line, where his visit was an inspiration to all the troops. "He was in splendid form", says the same correspondent, "and very cheery, frequently speaking to the men in the trenches. He seemed to scorn danger. At one spot in the firing line, with the enemy only 20 yards away, the Colonial troops could scarcely refrain from cheering."

Lord Kitchener's visit evidently removed any lingering doubt that may have remained in his mind as to the advisability of evacuating a country which had already dashed so many hopes to pieces. "Remember," were his parting words to Sir Ian Hamilton before the departure of that commander for the Eastern campaign some eight months previously, "once you set foot on the Gallipoli Peninsula you must fight it through to a finish." Ill-luck had dogged the footsteps of the expedition ever since Russia, at the very outset, found herself unable to co-operate with her promised invasion of the western shore of the Black Sea, and the fall of M. Venizelos had wrecked the Allies' hopes of the active support of Greece. The only question now remaining was the probable cost of evacuation.

Not all the fighting was over, however. Both before and after Lord Kitchener's visit the struggle continued as relentlessly as ever, though it had settled down on all fronts to the dreary monotony of siege warfare. The Territorials of Princess Beatrice's Isle of Wight Rifles—the 1/8th Hampshire Regiment—were heard of in this later fighting, one of their officers, Second-Lieutenant G. W. Fox, winning the Military Cross "for conspicuous gallantry and good service as bombing officer to the garrison of Hill 60 between September 3 and October 21, 1915". He not only set a fine example of pluck and coolness to the bombers of the brigade, but also had considerable success as a sniper, until wounded for the third time on October 21.

Some of the stiffest fighting during October centred round the position known as "Dublin Castle", stubbornly defended against heavy odds by the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. On the night of October 2–3, Lieutenant W. P. Oulton, of the 3rd Battalion, won the Military Cross for saving the situation when in charge of a covering party, who were being heavily bombed. "By his coolness and courage", says the *Gazette*, "he kept those nearest him well in hand, and rallied the others", also organizing a rescue party and bringing in two men who were wounded. The men were lying between hidden Turkish snipers and some huts, and volunteers were called for to help in the work of rescue. One

of the volunteers was Sergeant S. Byrne, of the 1st Dublin Fusiliers, who was afterwards awarded the D.C.M., also awarded to Company Sergeant-Major M'Cann, of the same battalion, for invaluable devotion to duty during the defence of "Dublin Castle" from October 1 to 18.

"He organized the labour, and when any specially dangerous work was in hand he always personally superintended it, often under a galling fire from snipers. He made several night reconnaissances, and on the night of October 16–17 built a barricade under very heavy fire."

Throughout the same anxious period Captain H. F. de Wolf, who was attached to the 1st Dublin Fusiliers from the 16th Liverpools, displayed the greatest coolness and excellent decision under fire, "always getting the best out of the men under him", to quote from the record in the *Gazette* of his award of the Military Cross. In the last two days of these operations, from October 14 to 18, the 2nd Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) rendered yeoman service, attacking the enemy with bombs, catapults, trench mortars, and rifle grenades. Regimental Sergeant-Major Huband was in charge of most of these weapons, and earned the D.C.M. for his good work in bringing fire to bear rapidly on any required point. The same decoration was awarded to Sergeant W. J. Fryer for leading his men with conspicuous gallantry to the attack of a sniper's post near "Dublin Castle", and to Lance-Corporal S. Alexander for leading the company bomb-throwers with invariable courage and ability. Second-Lieutenant Edward Beckwith, who received the Military Cross, had charge of this company of the 2nd Royal Fusiliers during the last days of "Dublin Castle's" defence, when his energy, says the *Gazette*, "was indefatigable, and his organization of the work to be done excellent".

Siege warfare in Gallipoli brought in its train all the perils of mining operations which characterized the campaign on the Western front, and with it the heroism of rescue work in the hour of disaster. A thrilling instance of this occurred near Anzac on October 29, when Major Stewart F. Newcombe, Royal Engineers, earned the D.S.O. for his gallantry in leading the rescue parties into a mine which had become poisonous with gas fumes. He entered the mine tunnel soon after the first casualties were reported, and although suffering from the effects of the fumes continued to lead the rescue parties till completely disabled by the gas. Another officer lost his life in the same heroic work, in which also a number of Australians showed their indomitable pluck. When one of the officers was reported missing Second-Lieutenant E. T. Bazeley, of the 22nd Australian Battalion, descended the shaft, and found him lying insensible in the tunnel. Placing a rope round this officer, he was himself all but overcome by the fumes, but was just able to reach the mouth of the shaft in time. On recovering from the effects of the gas he again descended to complete the rescue, but once more was overcome. He volunteered a third time, but was not allowed to descend. For his heroic efforts he was decorated with the Military Cross. Sergeant R. G.

Stone, of the same Australian Battalion, who was one of the first to enter the tunnel, bringing out two men who were gassed at the mouth of the shaft, and roping two other men at the foot of the shaft, received the D.C.M., also conferred upon Private J. H. Kruger —another of the 22nd—who displayed the greatest pluck in repeatedly entering the tunnel and shaft, finally succeeding, with the aid of another man, in bringing up the body of the officer who had succumbed. Sapper C. R. Rankin, of the 4th Field Company, Australian Engineers, was another of the same band of heroes to receive the D.C.M. He made two descents, inspecting each branch down the fouled shaft, and was only just able to reach the mouth of the tunnel again on the second occasion.

Many such deeds served to shed lustre on the weary months before the hour struck to leave this infernal peninsula to its fate. The rest of the story until that hour arrived is one of isolated incidents, the only connecting thread being the design to keep the enemy off the scent. One incident of the kind brought the D.C.M. to two Territorials of the 1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry—Corporal Valentine and Private W. Roger—who set a fine example in a dashing bayonet charge at Azmac Dere, when they were both wounded, but continued in the assault with irresistible courage. Another incident, on the night of November 4–5, brought the Newfoundlanders on the scene, and gave them an opportunity of sharing in the tragic glory of the Gallipoli drama.

Hitherto we had only heard of the naval side of Newfoundland's share in the Great World War, for her gallant sons in the naval reserve had suffered grievous losses in the sinking of the armed steamers *Vicknor* and *Clan M'Naughton* early in 1915. Out of a population little more than half that of Birmingham she raised by the beginning of 1916 a military contingent of nearly 2000 men. Her first contingent of 500 men for military service had completed their training in the Motherland, and the 1st Battalion of the 1st Newfoundland Regiment having landed at Suvla in September, and been attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division, soon had its opportunity of distinguishing itself. On the night of November 4–5, when the Newfoundlanders were ordered to advance a portion of our line, a patrol of C Company which attacked and captured some Turkish snipers' dug-out, was heavily counter-attacked and in danger of being surrounded. Lieutenant James J. Donnelly was in command of this patrol, and though his force consisted of only eight men, he kept the enemy at bay all night in spite of several determined bomb and rifle attacks by the Turks on his front and flanks. The Military Cross was subsequently conferred upon him for his grit, as well as his coolness and skill in handling his small party, which was reduced to five by casualties. He was relieved at length by a dashing attack led by an officer and six men of the same regiment, who encountered the enemy at close range. When the officer and two men had been wounded Sergeant W. M. Greene took command, drove off the Turks, and

enabled the rescuing party to bring in the wounded. Both Sergeant Greene and Private R. E. Hynes, who also distinguished himself in the attack, were rewarded with the D.C.M. The fine work of the Newfoundlanders on this and other occasions about the same period was acknowledged by the following Brigade Order, issued by Brigadier-General D. E. Cayley, who also paid a high tribute to their gallantry and efficiency in a letter to the Governor of our oldest colony:—

"The G.O.C. wishes to place on record his appreciation of the excellent work done by the Newfoundland Regiment during the last few days. By their conduct in this, their first important work, they have brought distinction to the brigade, and have proved themselves to be possessed of self-reliance, bravery, and tenacity, the first qualities of a good soldier. C Company has gained honour for its battalion and for Newfoundland. At the same time, it is a certainty that other companies will do equally well when they get their chance. The whole battalion has been called upon for special exertions during the past week, and it has responded finely. Thanks to Newfoundland, an appreciable advance has been made against the enemy."

The slopes and ravines, which had baked under the tropical heat of the summer sun, proved equally trying habitations for troops living in the open or in cheerless dug-outs when the bleak winds blew from the Steppes and across the Black Sea. On November 21 the Peninsula was visited by a storm which everyone in the British lines is hardly likely ever to forget. Accompanied by torrential rains lasting for full twenty-four hours, it was said to be nearly unprecedented for the time of year. Hard frost and a heavy blizzard ensued, which spread disaster among our sorely-tried troops, especially among those of the 9th Corps. These were less favourably situated than the Anzacs and 8th Corps, who for the first time, probably, appreciated the surrounding hills for the protection they now afforded them. Sir Charles Monro describes how, in the low-lying area of the 9th Corps, the water-courses became converted into surging rivers, which carried all before them:—

"The water rose in many places to the height of the parapets, and all means of communication were prevented. The men, drenched as they were by the rain, suffered from the subsequent blizzard most severely. Large numbers collapsed from exposure and exhaustion, and in spite of untiring efforts that were made to mitigate the suffering, I regret to announce that there were 200 deaths from exposure, and over 10,000 sick evacuated during the first few days of December. From reports given by deserters, it is probable that the Turks suffered even to a greater degree. In this period our flimsy piers, breakwaters, and light shipping became damaged by the storm to a degree which might have involved most serious consequences, and was a very potent indication of the dangers attached to the maintenance and supply of an army operating on a coast-line with no harbour, and devoid of all the accessories, such as wharves, piers, cranes, and derricks, for the discharge and distribution of stores, &c."

And all this time, as well as in October, the dogged, monotonous struggle took ceaseless toll of some of our bravest and best. On October 15, for example, the 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers lost their brilliant com-

mander, Lieutenant-Colonel G. Butler Stoney, who, in the previous May, when only a Captain, had been sent up to take command of his battalion, and won the D.S.O. for his "great coolness and good leading, holding together in a most praiseworthy manner the battalion, which had suffered

Captain H. T. Cawley, Liberal Member for the Heywood Division of Lancashire, killed in Gallipoli
(From a photograph by Swaine)

greatly". He was only thirty-eight, and having been lent by the Egyptian Army for the purpose, had acted as a landing officer during the famous *River Clyde* landing.

A few weeks previously the House of Commons lost another of its members in Captain Harold T. Cawley, Liberal member for the Heywood Division of Lancashire, and Captain in the 6th (Territorial) Manchester Regiment. He was the second son of Sir Frederick Cawley, M.P. for Prestwich, who had already lost one son, Major Cawley, in the Great World War. The East Lancashire Division (42nd Territorial) were now holding the British left at Helles, on the old ground of the 29th, who, as already explained, had been moved up to Suvla for the final attempt to retrieve the fortunes of the campaign. They had won a great name for themselves, these Lancashire Terriers, and were now seasoned veterans, ready for anything or anybody.

One of the bravest among all their gallant officers was Second-Lieutenant Alfred V. Smith, 1/5th East Lancashires—son of the Chief Constable of Burnley—who sacrificed his life during these closing months of the campaign with a devotion which not only won the posthumous honour of the Victoria Cross, but also the rare distinction of special mention in a French Army Order. Second Lieutenant Smith was in the act of throwing a grenade in the trenches when it slipped from his hand and fell close to several brother officers and men. Shouting out a warning to these, he himself jumped clear and into safety, but seeing that the others had no time to reach cover, and knowing well that the grenade was due to explode, he returned without hesitation and flung himself down on it. He was instantly killed by the explosion, but his splendid deed undoubtedly saved the lives of his comrades. The facts were translated in an order issued to his troops by General d'Urbal, commanding the 10th French Army Corps, who added that "this act of bravery on the part of one of the officers of our brave

Allies deserved to be known by everyone".

A great reputation had also been won by the Lowland Territorials—"my own brave fellow-countrymen of the Lowland Division of Scotland", as Sir Ian Hamilton described them—who had shared all the hardships of the campaign in the southern zone since sacrificing themselves with magnificent courage in the battle of June 28, and were chosen for one of the last serious attacks on the Turkish trenches before the final evacuation. This was on November 15, after careful preparations which had been in progress for some considerable time in the sinister region of the Krithia Nullah, the scene of so many desperate encounters in the earlier battles. The signal for the new advance was the explosion of three mines under the enemy's trenches at 3 p.m., the infantry advancing to the attack being units of the 4th and 7th Royal Scots, 7th and 8th Scottish Rifles, and Ayrshire Yeomanry, all of the 156th Brigade—the brigade which, under the late Brigadier-General Scott-Moncrieff, had, in the words of Sir Ian Hamilton, "brought great distinction on their division" in the battle of June 28. Leaping forward like hounds from the leash, they now captured about 160 yards of trench on the east of the Nullah, and 120 yards on its west, and at once consolidated the position, bombing parties advancing up communication trenches and erecting barricades. The assault was effectually supported by our artillery, which simultaneously opened on the enemy's support trenches, two 14-in. monitors and H.M.S. *Edgar* co-operating. Fire was maintained until the position was reported consolidated about 6 p.m., the enemy's batteries meantime replying heavily, but very erratically. No attempt at counter-attack was made by the Turkish infantry until two nights later, when they were easily repulsed. The Lowlanders' casualties in this successful little advance were under fifty killed and wounded, but the losses which they inflicted on the enemy, who was caught by machine-guns, rifle fire, and bombs, were considerably greater. Over seventy Turkish dead were counted in the captured position alone, and one of the prisoners reported that upwards of thirty had been buried by the explosion of one of the mines.

November, apart from the phenomenal rain-storm and blizzard already described, and such memorable incidents as the blooding of the Newfoundlanders and the assault of the Lowlanders, added no episode of outstanding military importance to the story of the campaign. The minor enterprises were carried out by the various Corps Commanders chiefly in order to maintain an offensive spirit in their commands and to puzzle the enemy as to our real intentions. An increased activity of the Turkish artillery, however, became a significant factor, showing that no time was to be lost in arranging the withdrawal.

When the evacuation was decided upon by the Government, on the combined judgment of their naval and military advisers, and after all the positions had been examined on the spot by Sir Charles Monro and Lord Kitchener, considerable losses were

deemed to be almost unavoidable. To disengage and withdraw in the face of a determined enemy is counted the most difficult of all military operations. It was entirely due to the foresight and skill of the naval and military staffs, and the discipline of all ranks, that the retreat became a source of pride as well as of bitter regret.

"It was not without deep reluctance and regret", said the Prime Minister in the House of Commons a day or so later, "that we sanctioned the withdrawal, especially of Anzac, which is consecrated by so many heroic exploits which have won for our gallant kinsmen from Australia and New Zealand an undying memory of honour. It has been carried out by the Navy and the Army in combination in a manner for which no praise can be high enough, and which will, I believe, give it an enduring place in the annals of warfare."

Suvla as well as Anzac was evacuated in this great withdrawal in December, 1915, culminating on the night of the 18th–19th in the embarkation of the last man of two whole armies, with the total loss of only three wounded. Discarding all text-book theories on the necessity of a combined naval and military feint in order to throw the Turks off the scent, Sir Charles Monro decided to make no departure of any kind from the normal life which was being followed both on sea and on land. "A feint", as he says, "which did not fully fulfil its purpose would have been worse than useless, and there was the obvious danger that the suspicion of the Turks would be aroused by our adoption of a course the real purpose of which could not have been long disguised." Sir W. Birdwood was accordingly directed to prepare a scheme without allowing for a demonstration elsewhere, and on the lines already contemplated by the new Commander-in-Chief, that the evacuation could best be conducted by a subdivision into three stages. The whole operation, of course, was not the work of a single night. It went on in secret for ten nights in succession, the first stage being planned for the removal of the winter stores, &c.; the second for the shipment of all food and ammunition save those needed up to the last moment by the troops; and the final stage, occupying two nights, for the embarkation of the guns, transport animals, and troops. The men were all removed by carefully calculated degrees until only picked troops from each brigade held the first-line trenches.

"It was imperative, of course," wrote Sir Charles Monro, "that the front-line trenches should be held, however lightly, until the very last moment, and that the withdrawal from these trenches should be simultaneous throughout the line. To ensure this being done, Lieutenant-General Sir W. Birdwood arranged that the withdrawal of the inner flanks of corps should be conducted to a common embarking area under the orders of the G.O.C. 9th Corps. In the rear of the front-line trenches at Suvla the General Officer Commanding 9th Corps broke up his area into two sections, divided roughly by the Salt Lake. In the southern section a defensive line had been prepared from the Salt Lake to the sea, and Lala Baba had been prepared for defence; on the left the second line ran from Kara Kol Dagh through Hill 10 to the Salt Lake. These lines were only to be held in case of emergency—the principle governing the withdrawal being that the troops should proceed direct from the trenches to the distributing centres near the beach, and that no inter-

mediate positions should be occupied except in case of necessity. At Anzac, owing to the proximity of the trenches to the beach, no second position was prepared except at Anzac Cove, where a small keep was arranged to cover the withdrawal of the rearmost parties in case of necessity."

The Turks, however, were completely baffled: a fact the more astonishing when we remember at what close quarters they had been—in many cases within a few yards of each other, as Sir Charles Monro pointed out in the Special Order of the Day which he issued on December 21, expressing his appreciation of the way in which the withdrawal had been carried out.

"During the past months", concluded the new Commander-in-Chief, "the troops of Great Britain and Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, Newfoundland and India, fighting side by side, have invariably proved their superiority over the enemy, have contained the best fighting troops in the Ottoman army in their front, and have prevented the Germans from employing their Turkish allies against us elsewhere.

"No soldier relishes undertaking a withdrawal from before the enemy. It is hard to leave behind the graves of good comrades, and to relinquish positions so hardly won and so gallantly maintained as those we have left. But all ranks in the Dardanelles army will realize that in this matter they were but carrying out the orders of His Majesty's Government, so that they might in due course be more usefully employed in fighting elsewhere for their King, their country, and the Empire. There is only one consideration—what is best for the furtherance of the common cause. In that spirit the withdrawal was carried out, and in that spirit the Australian and New Zealand and the 9th Army Corps have proved, and will continue to prove, themselves second to none as soldiers of the Empire."

After the Evacuation of the Northern Zone: burning stores ashore, photographed from H.M.S. *Cornwallis*, the last ship to leave Suvla Bay, December 19, 1915

Save for a relatively small quantity

of stores, and six guns, which had to be abandoned, and were destroyed, the whole force both at Suvla and Anzac, with its full equipment, was removed in perfect security, to the devout relief not only of the Mother Country, but also of the Oversea Dominions. Mr. Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister, declared that the evacuation of Anzac would spur them all on to still greater efforts. "This is no time for carping criticism", he added. "Australia is in this war to the end, and that end must, and shall be, victory, final and complete." The same loyal, determined spirit expressed itself in New Zealand. The withdrawal, as the *Dominion* said, was regrettable strategically, but sentiment must not be allowed to interfere with strategy. "New Zealanders were not going to whine or whimper. If our men could serve the Empire elsewhere we should not complain of their withdrawal from Gallipoli."

Their valour and fortitude had already shed fresh lustre on British arms, as the King afterwards said in his message to the Governor-General of Australia and Governor of New Zealand, sent on the following Anzac Day (April 25, 1916), when His Majesty attended the memorial service in Westminster Abbey:—

"Tell my people of Australia and New Zealand", wrote the King, "that to-day I am joining with them in their solemn tribute to the memory of their heroes who died in Gallipoli.

"They gave their lives for a supreme cause in gallant comradeship with the rest of my sailors and soldiers who fought and died with them. Their valour and fortitude have shed fresh lustre on the British arms.

"May those who mourn their loss find comfort in the conviction that they did not die in vain, but that their sacrifice has drawn our peoples more closely together and added strength and glory to the Empire."

A day or two after the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac Mr. Tennant gave the following particulars of our total losses in action in the Dardanelles up to December 11, 1915, including the Naval Division:—

	Officers.	Other Ranks.
Killed (including died from wounds and died) ...	1,609	23,670
Wounded	2,969	72,222
Missing	337	12,114
Totals	4,915	108,006
Grand total	112,921	

The cases of sickness admitted to hospital between April 25 and December 11, 1915, numbered in all 96,683.

It only remained to complete the evacuation of Gallipoli by removing the French and British armies from the southern zone at Helles. No hint of this further impending withdrawal was allowed to escape, the Prime Minister indeed explicitly announcing that the northern removal did not involve any similar operation at Helles, where our joint naval and military forces still commanded the entrance to the Straits. The Turks, however, were hardly likely to be deceived either by such astute assertions or the obvious preparations in progress at Helles for holding the position through the winter. With the evacuation of the northern theatre they were able to concentrate all their artillery in the south, and double the weight of artillery fire.

It was only the artillery that the troops had serious cause to fear in the final retirement.

"Every part of the ground", wrote Reuter's correspondent, who was present at the time, "was open to his fire. He could shell the communication trenches, the roads along which the troops had to withdraw, and the beaches from which they had to embark, not only from Achi Baba and the hill behind Krithia, but from Asia. Nobody feared his infantry, or even believed that they would attempt to follow us up. They would know from their experience at Suvla and Anzac that our trenches would be mined, the roads blocked with barbed wire, and the open ground sown with trip mines. Furthermore, there was not a kick left in the Turkish infantry who faced us."

For a week or more after the northern withdrawal they bombarded our positions at Helles to their hearts' content, and then somewhat slackened fire as they saw as yet no sign of further retirement. They were further mystified in the closing days of the year by a vigorous attack from the British centre, resulting in the capture of a Turkish trench, as though a fresh determined effort was developing against Achi Baba. Under cover of this new offensive the plans for the final retirement, thoroughly prepared for days past, and perfectly organized by the Allied commanders and their staffs, were put into operation. General Birdwood had already arranged with

General Brulard, commanding the French forces on the Peninsula, that the French infantry should be relieved as early as possible, in order to escape the drawbacks of divided command in the final stage. Orders had accordingly been issued for the withdrawal of the French troops, other than their artillery, early in December, and a portion of the line held by French Creoles had been taken over by the Royal Naval Division on the 12th of that month. By the 21st the number of the French garrison on the Peninsula had been reduced to 4000 men. These were relieved on the night of January 1–2, 1916, and embarked by their own Navy. As the French withdrew we took over their sector on the right of the Allies' line, ending in the deep ravine known as the Kereves Dere, where the French and Turks, with their positions in full view of each other on opposite sides, and equally impossible to take, had maintained a kind of unofficial truce for months past.

The relief was probably devised with the idea of raising doubts in the enemy's mind as to whether the French alone were leaving. In any case, neither the British nor the Turks disturbed the strange peace in the Kereves Dere when the first move was made; and every day from the beginning of the new year the work of evacuation on the beaches proceeded without interruption, save for the enemy's shells both from Achi Baba and the Asiatic shores. At last, when only one more day remained to complete the whole operation, which had followed the same system as that practised so successfully at Suvla and Anzac, the Turks seemed suddenly to realize what was happening. This was on Friday, January 7, when they opened a general bombardment of our lines at 1.30 p.m., gradually increasing its intensity until, at 4 p.m., when they sprang two mines near the positions known as "Fifth Avenue" and Fusilier Bluff, on the extreme left of our line, between the edge of the cliff overlooking the sea and the great Gully Ravine. The springing of the mines was obviously the signal for the infantry attack, for the Turks fixed bayonets all along our front. The enemy, however, was in little mood to sacrifice himself against a foe who in any case would soon be leaving him in peace, and whose naval guns had their range to a nicety. "Our shortage of artillery at this time", says Sir Charles Monro, "was amply compensated for by the support received from the fire of the supporting squadron under Captain D. L. Dent, R.N." The Turkish officers, added Sir Charles, were seen apparently endeavouring to make their men assault, but they were only successful in doing so opposite "Fifth Avenue" and Fusilier Bluff, where the attack was completely repulsed by the Staffordshires, a large proportion of the advancing Turks being killed or wounded. Our own casualties in this last battle of the Gallipoli campaign amounted to 6 officers and 158 men killed and wounded. The action had probably satisfied the Turks that there was no immediate prospect of our slipping from their clutches. They little dreamt that word was passed round that very even-

ing to the remaining British officers in charge that the last stage in the withdrawal would be completed on the following night.

Progress had been slower than Sir Charles Monro had hoped, owing to accidents, like the sinking of one of our largest horse ships by a French battleship, which considerably retarded the withdrawal, and to the weather, strong winds springing up which seriously interfered with the work on the beaches. It was because of the increasing uncertainty of the weather that General Sir W. Birdwood arranged with Admiral Sir J. de Robeck for the assistance of some destroyers to accelerate the progress of re-embarkation, and to fix the final stage of the evacuation for the night of January 8, or the first fine night after that date.

Daybreak of January 8, 1916, found no one left of the Expeditionary Force on the Peninsula save the last fighting troops. The night had been fine, and the evacuation quietly and successfully continued throughout the hours of darkness. Most of the guns had now been safely shipped, only those remaining which were necessary to retain on shore for emergencies up to the last moment. Wagons and the like that were not worth shipping were either smashed up or thrown over the cliffs. Immense quantities of abandoned material were collected on the beaches and soaked in petrol for destruction in the farewell blaze. Then came the withdrawal of the last troops, in three orderly trips, the first of which was timed for 9 p.m. Apart from the weather, which suddenly grew worse during the afternoon of the 8th, the programme worked splendidly. But the wind, blowing at the rate of 35 miles an hour by 11 p.m., added enormously to the difficulties of the task. Fortunately it was very dark, and the Turkish artillery was practically quiescent throughout.

From midnight onwards it was only just possible to use the piers and lighters, and out of the question to embark troops in destroyers along sunken ships at W Beach, as arranged, the connecting piers being washed away in the storm. One lighter went ashore at Gully Beach, and the remaining troops had to march to W Beach, where four piers were kept going. In spite of these difficulties the programme was completed with brilliant success.

Map showing approximately the Area in the Southern Zone evacuated in January, 1916

Vice-Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., decorated for his Services in the Gallipoli Evacuation
(From a photograph by Heath, Plymouth)

"The last ditchers in the fire trenches", to quote from the vivid account by Reuter's correspondent, who watched the operations on V Beach from the battered hulk of the *River Clyde*, through one of the great ports in the side of which, cut for the April landing, the retreating troops now passed to the lighters and trawlers beyond, "kept up a normal amount of sniping until the end, and even had a few machine-guns with them in case of need. They came in their turn. After them came the destruction party from the beach, who made everything ready for the final blaze. By three o'clock there was nothing more to wait for. It was time to gather our own traps and get on board the trawler. We knew that all had gone well at W beach. The enemy was delightfully quiescent, and the job was done. We cast off from the *River Clyde* at 3.35, the principal military landing officer being the last man to leave the ship. Not the least depressing thought that one had at that moment was that the glorious battered old hulk must be left there to be blown to pieces by our warships, so that the Turks should not get her."

Not until the abandoned stores and material were fired simultaneously by a time fuse after the evacuation had been completed did the Turks awaken to the fact that the last of the British had escaped. Vast explosions rent the air as the fire reached the tons of explosives which had to be left behind, and told the enemy that he had failed after all to be in at the death. Then, all along his line, red lights were fired as a signal of alarm, and the artillery, hitherto so silent all through the critical hours of the night, at once opened heavy shelling on our beaches and second-line trenches. The red lights continued for an hour and a half, and the shelling until after daybreak. But the shells were too late. The whole of the Allies' last evacuation had been successfully completed with the loss of one British rank and file wounded, and twenty-one worn-out guns (including six French naval guns) which were blown up before they left.

The tension of this closing act of the Dardanelles drama was increased by the presence of hostile submarines. Word had been received early in the evening that one was believed to be moving down the Straits, and about midnight H.M.S. *Prince George*, which had embarked 2000 men, reported that she had been attacked. Her escape seemed providential, the torpedo which struck her failing to explode. That was the nearest approach to catastrophe in the whole course of an operation which reflected the highest credit on everyone concerned, from

Sir Charles Monro downwards. Sir William Birdwood and his Corps Commanders had elaborated and prepared the orders, in the words of the Commander-in-Chief, "with a skill, competence, and courage which could not have been surpassed". They had the further stroke of good fortune in being associated with Vice-Admiral Sir J. de Robeck, Vice-Admiral Wemyss, "and a body of Naval Officers whose work well be proud. It deserves, and I am sure will receive, the profound gratitude of the King and the country, and will take an imperishable place in our national history. His Majesty will be advised that General Sir Charles Monro, Admirals de Robeck and Wemyss, Lieutenant-Generals Birdwood and Davies, and other officers who worked under them, will receive special recognition for their services."[1]

Nothing but the steadiest of troops would have made such an achieve-

Official Photograph

The Supreme Sacrifice: Australian officer visiting a friend's grave before the evacuation of Gallipoli

remained throughout this anxious period at that standard of accuracy and professional ability which is beyond the power of criticism or cavil". Taken in conjunction with the earlier retirement from Suvla and Anzac, this operation, as the Prime Minister said a few days later in the House of Commons, was without parallel in military and naval history:—

"That it should have been carried through with no appreciable loss, in view of the vast amount of *personnel* and *matériel* involved," continued Mr. Asquith, "is an achievement of which all concerned, commanding officers, officers, and men in both Services, may ment possible; and in the midst of the humiliation of their withdrawal it was no little consolation to know that these gallant men would now have an opportunity of winning fresh laurels in a sphere affording at least a sporting chance of success. F. A. M.

[1] In due course Sir Charles Monro, who shortly afterwards succeeded Sir Douglas Haig in command of the First Army on the Western front, was created K.C.M.G., and Lieutenant-General Davies K.C.B. In the *Gazette* of March 14, 1916, announcing these and many other awards in connection with the Gallipoli campaign, it was noted that the services of Vice-Admirals Sir J. de Robeck, K.C.B., and Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., had been recognized in the *Gazette* of January 1, 1916, and those of Lieutenant-General Sir W. R. Birdwood, K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., in the *Gazette* of June 23, 1915.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENTS OF THE WAR BY AIR

Lessons of the War—Scouts and Fighting Units—Problems of Engine-power—The Sikorsky Biplane—Thrilling Experiences of Garros and Pegoud—British Work on the Western Front—Germany and the Fokker Monoplane—Aircraft in the Italian Army—D'Annunzio's Adventures in the Italian Air Service.

EARLY in the war in the air a need was shown for the provision of air-craft built specially to carry out, in the most efficient manner possible, certain individual tasks. In the West, for instance, with the adversaries facing each other from month to month along the same positions, the air war displayed a tendency to become intensive, duels taking place constantly between hostile craft. Even when the land forces lie immovable, a large amount of flying must be done from day to day; flying which is of a routine character, and concerning which very little becomes known. Observations must be made of the enemy's trenches and gun positions. Photographs must be taken from the air of localities that have a special interest for Head-quarters. The artillery must be directed in its firing when it pours shells at stated intervals over the hostile territory. Certain flights of a strategical nature are in addition required, long journeys being made by air to the rear of the enemy's lines. And this is apart from the organization of bomb-dropping raids, which are made frequently so as to harass the opponent on his lines of communication.

All this flying, carried out daily in the Great War as a matter of course, entailed a ceaseless passing and repassing above the enemy's lines; and this constant invasion of his air space, particularly when his secrets were in danger of being revealed, the enemy resisted vigorously, using his anti-aircraft guns and sending up also his defensive aeroplanes. And this meant aerial fighting; not occasional and haphazard, as in the early stages of the campaign, but constant, and waged with a growing skill.

It was to meet this situation, to adapt the routine of flying to the exigencies of constant fighting, that the combatants, and particularly the Allies, organized their work very thoroughly and efficiently. When, for instance, scouting craft ventured over the enemy's lines, either on reconnaissance or for artillery control, or when bomb-dropping machines were sent on a raid, these aeroplanes, being regarded no longer as fighting units, were escorted whenever possible, while in danger zones, by specially-chosen armed craft—machines flying fast, and equipped with a gun or guns, whose task it was to meet attacking airmen should they ascend to repel the invasion of their territory, and prevent them from interfering with the reconnaissance or the dropping of bombs.

Bomb-dropping machines requiring this escort were built primarily for the

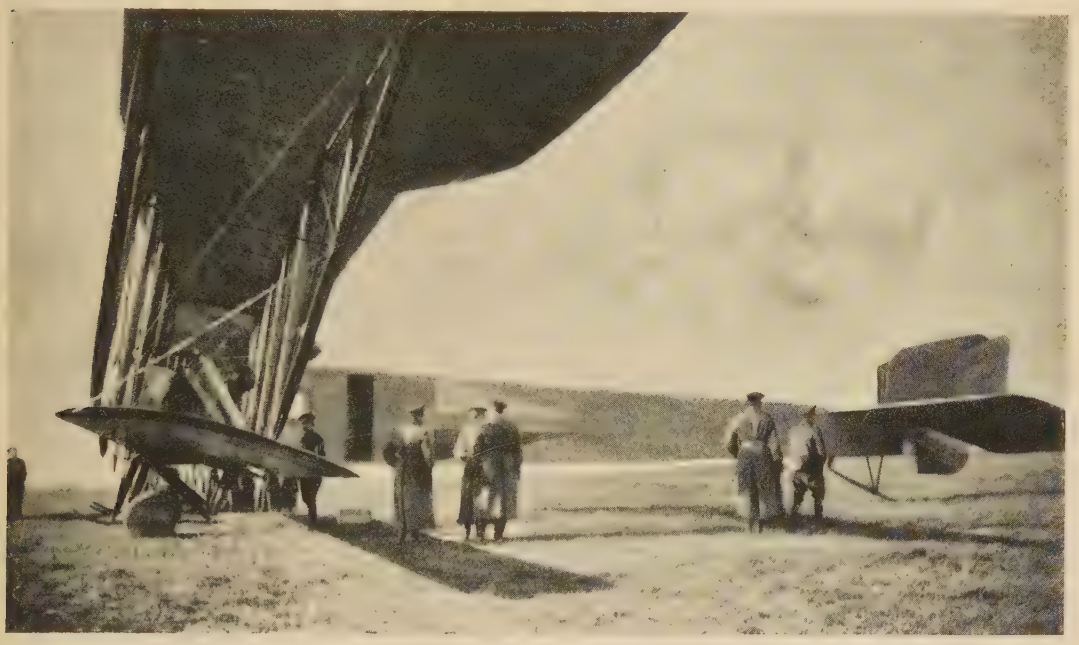
lifting of heavy loads. They were not well fitted to defend themselves against aerial attack, their rôle being merely to carry a maximum weight of bombs from one point to another, and drop them to the best effect. The reconnaissance or artillery-directing aircraft, which may also need escorting, were usually biplanes carrying a pilot and passenger, the latter acting as the observer, and being provided with an installation of wireless telegraphy, which enabled him to send rapid and constant messages to an operator at a land station with whom he was in touch. Such a machine, when directing artillery, would patrol to and fro above a given stretch of country, its observer watching the bursting of the shells from the battery he was controlling, and tapping out information for the gunners, which—owing to the rapidity of this wireless communication—could be acted on without delay.

The purely fighting aeroplane was developed assiduously during the progress of the war. In the first duels of the air, as fought in the summer of 1914, pilots in single-seated scouting craft, arming themselves with revolvers or automatic pistols, waged conflicts which were haphazard and mainly indecisive. Rifles played their part also in this early fighting; and then came the machine-gun. Aeroplanes were in existence, before the war, which had been fitted experimentally with light machine-guns; but the drawback with them was that—motors of sufficient power not being available—they flew too slowly, when burdened with pilot, passenger, gun, and ammunition, to make them a match for the swifter craft, less heavily loaded, which they were called on to combat, and seek if possible to drive from the air.

Difficulties presented themselves, also, in mounting machine-guns in aeroplanes. Unlike a craft on the water, or say an armoured motor-car on land, the fighting aeroplane must expect to be attacked, not only from in front and behind, and from either side, but also from above and below. It proved an awkward problem, therefore, with the early types of fighting craft, which had only one combatant and one gun, to place this man and his weapon so as to obtain a maximum field of fire; particularly when one remembers that there were the widespread planes of a machine, projecting on either side of the hull, which were immovable obstructions to the handling of a gun. Even if the combatant was set well forward, in advance of the planes, a position adopted very largely, there was more than one angle at which—assuming his craft was assailed from the rear—he would find that his fire was masked by the planes of his own machine. In combats say between individual machines, neither of them being supported in their fighting by any companion craft, the question became one of manœuvring—each pilot seeking to bring his aeroplane into such a position that his own gunner had a clear field, while that of the adversary was obstructed.

But it happened frequently, in the guerrilla form of fighting which was waged in the air, that one machine, when over the enemy's lines, would be attacked by several hostile craft. And in this case the pilot so assailed,

while he could manœuvre so that his gunner was firing advantageously at the machines ahead of him, or on either side, might find his craft exposed very dangerously to a stream of bullets from the rear. In many cases, for instance, it was possible for one airman, when taking part in a combined attack on some hostile ma-



Super-biplanes in the Russian Army: one of the Sikorsky machines, with accommodation for sixteen passengers

chine, to manœuvre up close behind this craft, while its gunner was engaged with adversaries who were in front, and cripple it with a fire directed from a point-blank range.

What was needed, but what could not be provided until problems of engine-power were solved, was an aeroplane in which there could be, say, two combatants, each handling a machine-gun, and so placed in the hull of the craft that one could fire at all angles ahead, and the other cover all angles at the rear. To make such a machine practicable, to give it a speed which would enable it to close in quickly on an antagonist—even when loaded so heavily—it was recognized that it would need to be engined powerfully; and it was this question of motive-power that constructors, encouraged financially as they were by the demands of war, solved by the adoption of a system which had been tested already in a tentative way.

A pioneer in this field had been the Russian engineer Sikorsky. He built before the war a biplane of an altogether exceptional size, fitted with four 100 h.p. motors, which had carried sixteen people, in a trial flight, to a height of several thousand feet. His machine was, however, at the outbreak of hostilities, in too experimental a form to render decisive service; but it

was improved as the war progressed, being used frequently, and with effect, in bomb-dropping raids.

Fighting aeroplanes, when fitted with more than one motor, were not only given the additional power that was required, but were saved also from the risk, when over hostile territory, of being brought to earth, and lost, through any failure of their engines. With a single-engine craft, if its motor stopped while above the enemy, and it was too far from its own lines to reach them in a glide, the pilot had perforce to reconcile himself, as a rule, to being made a prisoner. In this way, indeed, purely through some mechanical breakdown, the services have been lost of many an excellent flyer. Garros, the French champion, while returning from a bomb raid, found that his motor failed suddenly while he was still some distance within hostile territory. There was no chance, by prolonging his glide, to reach the French lines, and his engine refused obstinately to fire again. So there was nothing to do but plane down into the nearest field. This Garros did, and then attempted to hide himself; but he was discovered, and made a prisoner. Pégoud, another famous French pilot, who first "looped the loop" in public, escaped very narrowly a similar fate. He was brought down, by lack of fuel, some distance behind the enemy's lines; but in his case friendly peasants, being able to provide him with a can of petrol, enabled him to ascend again before the advent of a German patrol.

With duplicate-engined craft it was found possible for the machine, even when the power of one engine was lost altogether, either by mechanical failure or the damage of hostile fire, to fly back safely to its own lines, though of course at a reduced speed. In one case, for instance, a French biplane, which had been fitted with two motors, came within a heavy zone of fire. A shell burst right in front of it, and one of the engines was so damaged that it stopped instantly. But, having the other to rely on, and handling his machine dexterously, the pilot managed to regain his starting-point. In a single-engined craft he would have been lost.

The fighting aeroplane, the machine which has been styled a "battleplane", was still, at the end of 1915, in what may be called its small and experimental stage, developing hundreds of

Pégoud—the first flying-man to "loop the loop"—one of the Heroes of the French Air Service on the Western Front

(From a photograph by H. Manuel, Paris)

Official Photograph issued by the French War Office

Defending Paris against Air Raids: French anti-aircraft gun post

horse-power when ultimately it would have thousands. But already, given two or more engines, and an ability to lift a pilot, two passengers, and a couple of machine-guns, an offensive craft was provided which had a real value. Both the Allies and the enemy, realizing the need for these fighting machines, as apart from craft for bomb-dropping or the routine of observation, obtained craft as powerful as their designers could plan or their constructors build. The aim of each flying corps, when two great armies are opposite each other, is to see all that can be seen of the enemy's dispositions — to penetrate as often as possible above his territory — and, at the same time, by a ceaseless use of fighting craft, prevent him from making similar observations over their own lines. The success that is attained, the value of the news which one air corps secures, and the amount of information it prevents the enemy from obtaining, give the measure of its efficiency — of its real value from the point of view of the Head-quarters Staff.

Up to this period the Allies, notably in the West, had shown a marked superiority. In the routine of their flying, in their constant supply of information, in their artillery control, and in their bomb raids, the British and the French aviators had done consistently better work than the Germans. In the House of Commons, on January 24, 1916, Mr. Tennant, citing figures which extended over the previous four weeks, was able to show that 1227 British machines had crossed above the enemy's territory; while, during the same period, only 310 German air-craft had ventured over the British lines. During these four weeks, also, we had employed 138 machines in bomb-dropping raids, the enemy using no more than 20.

These statistics had been obtained by Mr. Tennant, and duly announced, as a result of the publicity which had been obtained by Germany, both in enemy and neutral countries, in connection with the work of an improved monoplane, the Fokker, which she

had built to operate defensively behind the German lines. This machine, a metal-framed monoplane, had been constructed specially for its defensive rôle—to rise quickly, that is to say, from behind its own lines, to operate within a small radius, and to carry a minimum load and attain a maximum speed. Engined with powerful motors,

The machine-guns with which the Fokker monoplanes were fitted were placed rigidly in the bow, firing straight ahead through the propeller in the line of flight, baffle-plates being fitted on the propeller-blades so as to deflect, without injury to the propeller, any bullets which might strike the blades as they revolved. This device, also

Brought down behind the Russian Lines: captured German Albatross machine being dispatched by rail to a repair-shop

and carrying only one occupant, a pilot who was also a combatant, these machines were able to attain high rates of speed, and proved formidable antagonists for craft which, owing to the fact that they were invaders and not defenders, and had to fly some distance in the fulfilment of their tasks, needed to burden themselves with heavy loads of fuel—besides carrying, in many cases, an observer as well as a pilot.

the rigid mounting of the machine-gun, were introduced first, it may be noted, by the Allies.

The pilot of the Fokker, with his gun fixed and forming one with his machine, needed to swing his craft, and not merely his weapon, when he sought to aim at an opponent; and this need for rapid manœuvring, to say nothing of the skill required to handle accurately so powerful and speedy a machine, meant that only

picked airmen, of a quite exceptional ability, could hope to fly such monoplanes with success. Some of the German aviators, pilots who had the requisite nerve and skill, did learn to handle boldly these defensive craft; and it was inevitable, therefore, that, our daily invasion of the enemy's air space being steadily maintained, certain of our machines should be brought to earth. They represented the price of the information we secured. Had the Germans been as vigorous in their observation, and had penetrated as persistently above our territory as we did over theirs, they too would have suffered. These Fokker monoplanes, though efficient craft for their special task, were by no means unique. There were fast-flying British machines, detailed for defensive work behind our own lines, whose pilots were ready to give as good or a better account of themselves, in attacks on invading craft, as did these German airmen in their monoplanes.

In dispatches issued during January, 1916, by emphasizing the number of British air-craft brought down while over enemy lines, by ignoring the corresponding losses of German machines, and by giving no idea of the relative amount of useful flying that had been done by the two corps, the Germans sought to create the impression that their Fokker monoplanes, defeating craft after craft of the British, were crippling us heavily in our aerial work, while they themselves remained more or less immune. But in the House of Commons Mr. Tennant, in presenting the official statistics just referred to, showed that for a period of four weeks, up to the last week in January, our losses in air-craft had been thirteen, while the enemy had lost at least nine, and probably two more. And it must be remembered, to understand the significance of these figures, that during the period in question we had been sending many more machines across the enemy's lines than they permitted to venture above ours. There is no need to underrate the value of the Fokker as a defensive monoplane, or to decry the individual success of enemy airmen. But such questions of offence or defence need to be viewed as a whole, and not from the point of view of what are no more than incidents in the progress of a long campaign. The questions that need to be asked, in regard to any given period of air work, are what information of value was obtained during that period, what amount of useful gun control was effected, and how extensively was the enemy harassed by bomb and other raids? The answer to these questions is that the Allies did uniformly better work than the enemy.

Excellent flying was also achieved by our ally, Italy. She gained in her Tripoli campaign—though the enemy was not highly organized—much information that was of value regarding the employment of air-craft on active service; and these data she used to effect in the greater campaign. Italy entered the war with appreciably more than 100 aeroplanes—machines, that is to say, which were ready for immediate use. She had nearly a dozen air-ships, craft of a moderate size which were intended more for reconnaissance than for long-distance raids.

Her air service comprised, also, a small but well-handled squadron of sea-planes, which did good work in the Adriatic. It was as a passenger in one of these sea-planes that the poet Gabriele d'Annunzio, who has been enthusiastic in his praise of the Italian air service, made a memorable flight from Venice. The machine had been detailed for a bomb-dropping raid, and its pilot flew along the shores of the Adriatic as far as Trieste. Here, while bombs were being dropped, the sea-plane was fired at from the earth; and one bullet, entering the hull, grazed d'Annunzio's elbow. During the bomb-dropping, too, an awkward thing had happened. One bomb, instead of sliding from the tube when the releasing gear was pressed, became wedged in some way, and refused to leave its tube. The pilot turned his machine at this, and began to fly back towards Venice; but when they neared the city, and were preparing to descend, they had to reckon with the awkward possibility that—shaking itself free at any moment from its tube the bomb might fall and do damage on Italian soil. So, as d'Annunzio describes the adventure, he had to lean forward with one hand, pumping to maintain pressure in the petrol tank, while with the other he groped downward into the bomb-tube, and sought to prevent the missile from breaking unexpectedly adrift. Luckily they alighted without accident, and the bomb remained in its tube. Some months afterwards d'Annunzio was badly wounded in the right eye while acting as observer in another flight over the enemy's lines.

Gabriele d'Annunzio, the Italian Poet, wounded while acting as Observer in the Italian Air Service
(From a photograph by Guigoni & Bossi, Milan)

C. G.-W.
H. H.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUEST OF THE CAMEROONS

(September, 1914–February, 1916)

Rounding up the Germans—Enemy Perversions—Native Reprisals against their Teutonic Taskmasters—German "Frightfulness" in the Cameroons—Charges against the Allies—Major-General Dobell's Reply—Gallant Work of French and Belgians—Failure of Allies' First Advance on Yaunde—Brigadier-General Cunliffe's Operations—Heavy Guns at Garua—Lieutenant-Colonel Maclear avenged—How Banyo fell—Major-General Dobell's Task—British Officers and their Native Troops—Some Thrilling Adventures—German Retreat from Yaunde—General Aymerich in Command at Yaunde—Enemy's Flight to Spanish Guinea—Elusive Germans—Defeated Governor's Message to Berlin—Capitulation of the Garrison at Mora—Conquest of Cameroons Complete—Parliamentary Tributes—Knighthood for Major-General Dobell.

WHY the Germans do not give in is a mystery", wrote one of the British officers in the Cameroons, after the fighting which by the end of 1914 had given the Allies the possession not only of the enemy's capital, but also of the whole of that part of the territory where the railways were running. It was easier to drive the Germans inland, however, than to round them up in a country about half as large again as Germany itself, with every physical difficulty of the tropics to contend with, from mangrove swamps, broad, crocodile-infested rivers, and desert scrub to dense jungle and mighty mountains which military science could render impregnable. The natural difficulties of the country almost counterbalanced the disparity in the numerical strength of the rival forces, affording the defending troops endless opportunities, as another British officer pointed out at the time, for ambushing, sniping, and other trickery common to savage warfare. That the Germans were in formidable strength they had proved early in the campaign at Garua, where, as described in an earlier chapter, they forced one of the British invading columns back over the Nigerian frontier.

They made the most of this and other minor successes in a characteristic tissue of lies addressed by the retreating Governor to the German district authorities after the surrender of Duala to the Franco-British force under Major-General Dobell on September 27, 1914. Realizing that this humiliation could not remain concealed from the natives, "and as damaging perversions and exaggerations will be heard if the news is left to the gossip of the caravans", he instructed the Germans to explain the position on the following lines:—

"At home the Kaiser has first taken the country which inflicted horrors on the natives, Belgium, to which the Congo belongs. We have occupied the whole country and driven out the King. Then the Kaiser has sent his soldiers deep into France, and is bombarding the largest French city, where the Governor of the French lives. The French have no longer a Kaiser.

"The (German) Kaiser has captured

General Kitschener,[1] whom the English regarded as their best commander, together with 10,000 soldiers. Kitschener was indeed the worst enemy of the Mohammedan blacks, and took a whole country from the Great Sultan.

"So many English ships have been destroyed that the English have now no more than we have.

"As our enemies at home cannot do anything to us, they are now trying to rob us and our natives in Africa. Africa is further from Germany than from France and England, so that their ships can be here sooner than we can.

"The English were not strong enough to take Duala, but had to call in the help of the French. We have moreover only surrendered Duala because there were so many white women and children there to whom, according to the law of the whites, nothing can happen if no fighting takes place in a town.

"Till now things have gone as follows in the Cameroons: We allowed the English and French to advance a short distance into the country. As soon as they were within it we, with our brave black soldiers and with the help of our natives, drove them out, and killed many whites among the enemy. The black soldiers of the English and French have already deserted them in masses, and come to us to fight on our side because they see that we are stronger; so it occurred at Garua, Ossidinge, and at Ojem, also at Molundu, and already sixteen white Frenchmen and many French soldiers have been killed. At Duala the same will occur."

The Governor was probably sufficiently well aware that the news of the Germans' retreat would be hailed with relief by the natives, who had no reason to love their Teutonic taskmasters. For years the natives had been subjected to forced labour for the German-owned plantations on the coast, where, in the Buea and Victoria districts alone, fully £1,000,000 had been spent on the development of cocoa, rubber, and other tropical resources. One of the first things the German Government did on the outbreak of war was to hang the ruling chief of the Duala tribe and other natives suspected of friendly leanings towards the British.

"I have ordered the destruction of all Duala villages", wrote one officer in a communication found in a message circulated among the German commanders, and printed in one of our Government papers on the campaign. "All Dualas met on the roads carrying weapons (matchets, bows and arrows, spears, and also rifles) are to be shot. Prisoners are only to be made when they are caught red-handed and can be legally tried and condemned to death. All Dualas still in the employment of the Government on the Northern Railway part of the Duala district will be arrested and sent under charge to Dschang. Baré district is going to do the same." It was scarcely surprising, therefore, as General Dobell pointed out, that the natives regarded the departure of the Germans and the arrival of the Allies as the dawn of a new era of freedom.

This utterance was part of Major-General Dobell's reply to the charges of ill-treatment, and licensed savagery on the part of the natives, subsequently made by certain prisoners of war on their arrival in Great Britain. The attitude of the German to the native inhabitants of the Cameroons, it was pointed out, was such that it was not

[1] This was eighteen months before Lord Kitchener lost his life in H.M.S. *Hampshire* while on his way to Russia.

surprising that they were apt to indulge in reprisals when opportunity offered. It was an infamous lie, however, to say that the Allied Forces encouraged these attacks, the case of a German private, who was said to have been seized by the natives and beaten to death, being the only instance of the kind that had come to Major-General Dobell's knowledge. When Duala was occupied, military patrols were sent out with orders to protect the town from pillage, but, adds the Commander-in-Chief, in answer to German charges of plundering, it was no easy matter to detail large parties for this purpose, the military requirements of the situation demanding the presence of bodies of our troops to patrol the surrounding country. Isolated Germans appear to have been attacked by the natives in outlying districts, but the surprising thing was, after the systematically brutal treatment to which they had been subjected by the enemy, "not that these attacks occurred, but that wholesale acts of revenge were not indulged in".[1]

As regards looting, it was not always possible, as the Major-General pointed out, to prevent these things in such circumstances, but even the Germans were admittedly impressed by the rapidity with which the various places were restored from chaos to order. The missionaries who brought most of the charges against the Allies—charges assiduously circulated in pamphlet form in neutral countries—were chiefly Germans, whose warlike attitude in the Cameroons was attested by the preacher who, as described in an earlier chapter, tried to blow up the gunboat *Dwarf* with dynamite, explaining, after his arrest, that he was a warrior first and an evangelist afterwards. "No other deduction is possible", wrote Major-General Dobell at the close of his report on the alleged atrocities, "but that the whole of these

Reconstructed after Demolition by the Germans: testing a bridge on the Northern Cameroon Railway with a heavily loaded train

[1] "Correspondence relative to the Alleged Ill-treatment of German Subjects captured in the Cameroons."

mendacious statements are part of an organized attempt to influence religious feeling in Switzerland and America by the well-known systematic methods employed by the enemy in these matters".

The difference between British and German rule was manifest at once, the Dualas, who had reason to be hostile to their white rulers long before the war, now behaving in a most orderly manner. "I am at a loss to understand", said General Dobell, "how there was any necessity for the continual hangings, and other repressive measures, carried out by the Germans."

The lie was given to the retreating Governor's threat to drive the Allies back, in the decisive defeat of the German attempt at the beginning of 1915 to recapture Edea, some 50 miles to the south-east, which had fallen to the French column under Colonel Mayer about a month after Duala. The enemy was now forced to withdraw his main force to the high plateaus in the centre of the colony, and establish a new seat of Government at Yaunde, evidently with an eye to retreat, in the last resource, to the only neutral spot within reach, Spanish New Guinea, wedged into the south-western corner of the country—the one remaining sanctuary in case of need. Everywhere else the Germans were hemmed in by British and French territory.

The principal advance on Yaunde was made by British and French columns from Edea, with Major-General Dobell's base at Duala, while other British columns under Brigadier-General F. H. G. Cunliffe, of the Nigerian forces, swept down from the north, and other French columns advanced westward from French Equatorial Africa.

A special word is due to the Belgians for their gallant co-operation with the French in these last-named columns. Their help came from the adjoining Government of the Belgian Congo, which at the beginning of the war, excessively anxious to observe its "scraps of paper", and in particular the Treaty of Berlin, had decided to maintain a strict neutrality. When, however, the Germans, by their attack on Lukuga, near the East African border of the Belgian Congo, plainly avowed their intention of treating this neutrality with no more respect than they had treated that of Belgium herself at the very beginning of the war, the Governor of the French colony was informed that he could count to the full on Belgian assistance.

This co-operation began with a brilliant little action at the end of October, 1914, when the Belgian steamer *Luxembourg*, manned by a detachment of Belgian colonial infantry, with three guns and a mitrailleuse, joined the French steamer *Commandant Lamy*, and shared in the operations which developed along the River Sanga at N'dzimou. In the report concerning these operations issued by the Belgian Minister in London it transpired that it was in consequence of the bold manœuvring of the *Luxembourg* that the German stronghold at this point was captured.

Lieutenant Bal, and M. Goransson, the commander of the *Luxembourg*, were subsequently appointed Cheva-

liers of the Legion of Honour. From that time onwards the Belgians shared in all the operations which followed, especially those in the advance towards Lomie and Yaunde. These and other French columns accomplished a remarkable feat in African warfare by fighting their way across the German colony from French Equatorial Africa, after recapturing the valuable strip which France had ceded as the price of the settlement of the Agadir crisis in 1911.

Remarkable though it had been in these respects, however, the French advance had not been as rapid as expected. It was not in time for the Allies' first advance on Yaunde in the spring of 1915, planned as a result of a mission which arrived at Duala in March from French Equatorial Africa to invite General Dobell's co-operation in that premature offensive. Though doubtful at the time as to the feasibility of the enterprise he ultimately consented to join forces with all his available strength, in view of the great advantage which would follow an early occupation of Yaunde. The British force, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel A. H. W. Haywood, R.A., was entrained on April 7, with instructions to begin a methodical advance in conjunction with the French column under Colonel Mayer. Both the line of the Kele River and the position at Ngwe were obstinately defended by the enemy, but were forced by the British troops, who also captured Wum Biagas on May 4, though not without serious losses. Here they were joined by the French force, which had also been stubbornly opposed, and the command of the Allied expedition devolved upon Colonel Mayer.

The terrain afforded many defensive positions, and at every turn of the road, says Major-General Dobell, the advance was met by machine-gun fire. Similar difficulties held up the French columns from the east and south-east under General Aymerich. Neither Dume nor Lomie had been captured by them on May 11. Colonel Mayer was then instructed to push on from Wum Biagas with the utmost vigour; but his difficulties proved insurmountable. Major-General Dobell, too, was unable at that period to co-ordinate the movements of all the scattered columns, owing, as he pointed out in his dispatch, to the vastness of the area, and the impossibility of establishing any means of communication between the various commanders. This fact, together with the almost impenetrable bush, the stubborn defence of the enemy, and the wastage through sickness, caused the first advance on Yaunde to end in failure. The main expeditionary force fell back on the line of the Kele River, where the rainy season brought an unavoidable lull in that sector until the following autumn.

Meantime, however, an Anglo-French force under Brigadier-General F. H. G. Cunliffe was advancing with brilliant success from the direction of the Nigerian frontier in the north-east. On June 11, 1915, these troops amply avenged our reverse at Garua in the previous August, not only capturing that formidable stronghold, but also compelling the surrender of the garrison. The Royal Navy, nothing

daunted by the fact that Garua was in the very heart of the colony, hundreds of miles inland, had a leading share in this success, as in so many other distant operations in the Great World War. A detachment under Lieutenant L. H. Keppel Hamilton, R.N., transported a naval gun for this attack some 160 miles up the lower reaches of the Niger River, thence 480 miles up the Benue River, and finally 60 miles by land, "thus contributing in large measure", says the *Gazette*, in recording that officer's award of the D.S.O. for his services, "to the success of the operations which culminated in the surrender of Garua". A similar and even more astonishing feat was the transport of a large-calibre French gun from Morocco upon boats over a thousand miles of waterway for the same attack.

The Germans had made tremendous preparations to put up a stubborn fight for this important station, inhabited by some 10,000 natives, and protected by a series of forts and every device known in field fortification, with underground bomb-proof shelters and store rooms, and even underground field hospitals in each. One of the British officers engaged in the attack, whose account of the operations was published some months later by the

With the Allies at Garua: left to right—Major Wright, Lieutenant Cook, Brigadier-General Cunliffe, and Lieutenant-Colonel Brisset

Colonial Office, says that each fort was surrounded by a strongly built circular mud wall riveted with gabions and fascines, and embrasured and loop-holed for rifle fire. Outside, a broad deep ditch was crossed by a single drawbridge, the approach to the ditch being guarded first by a line of deep pits with spears—some of them poisoned—stuck in each and carefully concealed, with the ground outside sprinkled over with broken glass and bamboo splinters; then by a circle of defences made of felled trees, with boughs pointing outwards; and beyond that by barbed-wire entanglements. It subsequently transpired that the Germans had kept 2000 labourers hard at work for over six months fortifying the place, knowing that the time would come when the British would return to exact a price for the disaster of the previous August.

The capture of this stronghold was a triumph of organization. Allied troops were posted to prevent the garrison from breaking through, while the main force began gradually sapping up by a series of parallel trenches nearer and nearer to the fort immediately to its front:

"Sapping", writes the officer already referred to, "only took place at night, the troops employed on this work occupying the newly-dug trenches by day and being relieved every twenty-four hours. A well-regulated bombardment of the three forts situated on the high ridge overlooking Garua, as well as on the old fort in the plain below, was kept up from heavy guns from a distance of about 4000 yards at first, and latterly from 3000 yards. This bombardment was supplemented on the last day or two by fire from smaller guns, for which there had been found a fairly well-concealed position about 1900 yards from Nos. 1 and 2 forts. The enemy kept up a very lively fire from their field-guns at first—in reply to our guns—which fortunately only resulted in the wounding of three or four men, but caused a good deal of excitement among the carriers and camp followers and a lot of amusement to the soldiers."

The defenders afterwards admitted that our heavy shell fire—melinite and lyddite—completely demoralized their men. A direct hit on No. 2 Fort presently burst into one of their bomb-proof shelters and killed some twenty of them. This seems to have been the climax. The troops began mutinying and refusing to man the forts; and on the last day, when the Allies' bombardment was at its height, many of their cavalry broke loose, seized their horses and rifles, and bolted. A number of them escaped from the fort only to be drowned in the river, for the Benue had meantime risen considerably, and there was no other way of escape from our mounted infantry and the French cavalry, who accounted for many of the fugitives.

The defenders' desperate plight in the forts was so little suspected by the Allies that on the afternoon of June 10, 1915, when white flags were suddenly hoisted, they were taken to mean, not surrender, but "merely another Teutonic ruse". However, the Cease Fire was ordered, and Brigadier-General Cunliffe, with Lieutenant-Colonel Brisset, the French commander, galloped with two Staff officers to our forward trenches, about 1000 yards from the enemy's position. Here they dismounted, and proceeded on foot,

headed by a man carrying a white shirt on a stick to do duty for a flag, until they arrived fairly close to the German fort, when they halted and awaited events.

"A long pause ensued", continues the author of this human little narrative of the surrender, "before they saw a party of horsemen under a white flag emerge from the old fort and advance in their direction. A German officer heading this procession on getting close to them dismounted, walked forward, saluted, and stated that he wished in the name of the German Commandant of Garua to offer the surrender of the forts, town, and garrison of Garua to the Allied Forces, but on certain conditions, namely, the garrison to march out with the honours of war, and to be allowed to proceed down south to rejoin the rest of the German forces! Our C.O. at once replied that he would listen to no terms of any sort, and that the surrender must be absolutely unconditional. The German saluted, and replied he would carry back this answer to the German Commandant, and requested two days' grace to bring back the Commandant's reply. Our C.O. said he would give him two hours, and that if no reply was then forthcoming, he would at once recommence the attack."

The Recapture of Garua: saluting the Tricolour and Union Flag hoisted over the German Commandant's house—seen in the photograph continued on the opposite page

Darkness set in before the hours of grace expired, but punctual almost to the minute lights were seen advancing, and the same officers returned to state that our terms had been accepted. All that the Commandant hoped was that the German officers would be allowed to retain their swords, and that the

native inhabitants of the town would be protected. This was agreed to, Von Cranzelheim, the Commandant, remaining in our camp that night as a hostage. Daybreak the following morning saw the Allies marching in triumph into Garua, where, in front of the Commandant's house, they pulled down the German flag, and in its stead hoisted, side by side, with a flourish of bugles, the Union Jack and the Tricolour.

The Recapture of Garua: saluting the Tricolour and Union Flag hoisted over the German Commandant's house, June 11, 1915

The surviving garrison numbered 300 odd, with nearly forty European officers and non-commissioned officers, the remaining spoils of war including four field- and ten machine-guns, 700 shells, some hundreds of rifles, an immense amount of small arms ammunition and other stores, and a well-equipped hospital. A close inspection of the defences caused the captors to realize their amazing luck in capturing the place without the loss of a single life. "I personally", wrote the official chronicler of the surrender, "reckoned on a heavy casualty list, both among officers and men, and in my inmost heart would have liked to have had one really good stand-up fight and allowed our men to get into them with the bayonet, and pay back our score for last August." Lieutenant-Colonel Maclear and the four other British officers who had been killed on that occasion had, however, been amply avenged. On the following morning a full funeral parade service was held

over their graves, and a large wooden cross erected, with their names engraved on it.

The fall of Garua was the last nail in the coffin of German prestige on the Nigerian frontier and in Central Africa. The Emir of Bornu celebrated the occasion with three days' public rejoicing in his capital, also sending £1000 to Sir Frederick Lugard as a further contribution to the British war-chest, and prayers for the victory of British arms. He had already sent £3500 for the same cause. "I am the servant of our lord the King," he wrote. "Why should I not help him to eat up his enemies."[1]

Having cleared the whole frontier of the Yola Province the Allies—between whom the most cordial relations existed, not a single case of friction being recorded either among the officers or the troops—struck south, occupying Ngaundere, one of the leading trade marts in the interior, about 120 miles by road from Garua, on June 29. Our losses on this occasion were two rank and file killed and eight wounded. Another column captured Kontsha, nearer the Nigerian frontier, on the following day. Fully realizing the crushing effect of the capture of the centre of their defence at Ngaundere, the Germans attempted to retake that position by a sharp night attack. This, however, only resulted in a fresh defeat for them. Thus their strongholds fell one by one, compelling the gradual retirement of the main German force southwards, and helping towards the fall of Yaunde, on which other columns were meanwhile converging from the south, east, and west. Tingere—to continue the record of the northern column—was captured a fortnight after Kontsha, Gashaka on August 16, Banyo on October 24, and Tibati on November 3.

The fall of Banyo led to some stubborn mountain fighting and an exhibition of endurance and bravery on the part of the Nigerian troops which called forth a special telegram of appreciation from the Secretary of State for the Colonies for Brigadier-General Cunliffe and all ranks concerned. These operations, like the fall of Garua, have been vividly described by one of the British officers in communications addressed to Sir Frederick Lugard, Governor-General of Nigeria. So admirably were the plans worked out, he writes, that the two columns, one under Brigadier-General Cunliffe and the other under Major Mann, advancing on Banyo respectively from Kontsha and Gashaka, arrived before that place at practically the same time.

"The capture of Gandua Pass by Major Mann's column was a fine performance. Not only did he have to surmount difficult physical obstacles, but the surprise and the successful rout of the enemy holding the pass created a great moral effect on the garrison of Banyo, and no doubt materially affected our success in forcing the passage of the Genderu Pass. The enemy opposing our advance, hearing of the capture of the Gandua Pass, and fearing their line of retreat on Banyo would be cut off, put up but a feeble resistance."

The writer was accompanying Brigadier-General Cunliffe's column from Kontsha, by way of Dodo, beyond

[1] *Battle Sketches, 1914–15.* By A. N. Hilditch (Oxford University Press).

The Conquest of the Cameroons: map showing approximately how the colony was cleared of the German troops, and the scene of the escape of their main force into Spanish Guinea

A, General Dobell's main columns, with French columns under Colonel Mayer. B, French southern columns. C, Franco-Belgian columns from French Equatorial Africa and Belgian Congo. D, Franco-British columns under Brigadier-General Cunliffe. E, Northern column under Lieutenant-Colonel Brisset.

which they had to cross a perfect barrier of mountains by a steep, narrow path. This led to a plateau guarded by a strongly-prepared enemy position, which, but for the moral effect of Major Mann's advance, would have been no easy matter to capture. As it was, the half-hearted enemy, who was driven back with no loss on our side, left Banyo fort to its fate on October 24, and withdrew to his grim, stupendous stronghold on the summit of Banyo Mountain, while the native chiefs came in to greet the conquerors with professions of loyalty and expressions of delight at their arrival. Having formally taken possession of the place, preparations were at once put in hand to deal with the retreated garrison on the mountain top, where the Germans, well stocked in advance with supplies of every description, were confident of holding out until the end of the war. With huge rocky boulders covering the mountain side, and linked together with strongly-built "sangars" right up to the summit, they regarded their position as invulnerable. The British attack on this redoubtable crest began in the early hours of November 4, 1915.

"The infantry," continues our official chronicler, "advancing from different directions, covered by the fire from our three guns, worked their way up slowly and doggedly foot by foot, climbing over rocks

and tearing their way through the thorny scrub and long grass, under a heavy rifle and maxim-gun fire from the enemy's 'sangars' and concealed snipers among the rocks. By the evening most of the companies had managed to struggle half-way up the hill, there getting what shelter they could from the incessant fire of the enemy aided by the light of fire-balls and rockets. Officers and men, exhausted and drenched with rain, hung on determinedly to the ground gained. At dawn on the morning of the 5th they started climbing once more. Our troops having got directly under the first line of 'sangars', the enemy, in addition to rifle and maxim-gun fire, started rolling down rocks and throwing dynamite bombs. All that day our men gradually worked their way up, capturing a small stone redoubt and 'sangar' here and there. Owing to the paucity of gun ammunition, the covering artillery fire could not afford the infantry the essential assistance so imperatively necessary on these occasions. Fortunately a convoy arrived on the afternoon of the 5th, bringing with it 200 more rounds of gun ammunition which, hurriedly sent out, enabled the guns to fire somewhat more rapidly till the upward advance of the infantry, and their proximity to the summit, rendered it too dangerous to continue their fire."

At 6 o'clock a terrific thunderstorm joined in the din of bomb exploding and the bursting of fire-balls, and added to the hardships of a struggle which seemed in danger of failure from the sheer physical exhaustion of our troops. But while our men were worn out with their days and nights of incessant climbing and fighting, the enemy, on his side, was completely demoralized by the determined nature of our advance. Under cover of the darkness, and the tumult of the thunderstorm, many of them wormed their way through our lines and scattered into the long grass beyond, where it was practically impossible to follow them. Up to that point the Germans had put up a stout resistance, contesting every yard, and using dynamite bombs as hand-grenades, which tried our troops very highly. It was only when they saw that our men, fighting magnificently, and gallantly led by their company officers, would not be denied that the bulk of them broke up during the storm into small scattered parties, and sought safety in flight, trusting to their knowledge of the intricacies of the country to find a way through. In the mist of the early morning of the 6th it was impossible to see what was happening, but the absence of opposition soon persuaded the conquerors that the enemy had fled, and with the clearing of the mist all doubt on the subject was finally removed.

"On the top of the mountain an extraordinary sight presented itself. Scattered in all directions were broken furniture, burst-open trunks and tin boxes, blankets, bedding, clothes, tins of food, broken bottles of wine and beer, smashed-up rifles, gramaphones, telephones, and a medley of every conceivable sort of thing. There were two fine cement-built reservoirs of water, a vegetable garden, caves converted into granaries and filled with mealies and guinea corn, cattle, pigs, and sheep browsing about, and chickens galore. This was very clear and conclusive proof of the conviction of the Germans that the mountain was impregnable, and that they meant to hold it indefinitely and continually worry us."

The capture of such a position, adds the same authority, was a task which would have tried the finest soldiers in the world; and Brigadier-General

Our Nigerian Troops in the Cameroons Campaign: native sentry guarding a pile of ivory found in Garua when the Germans surrendered

Cunliffe, who had a parade of all troops on the following day in honour of the occasion, declared in his official report, that their brilliant feat of arms was one of which Nigeria should be justly proud. Our losses amounted to between fifty and sixty killed and wounded, including Captain C. G. Bowyer-Smith, Gloucestershire Regiment, "one of our best and bravest company commanders", killed on the first day of the attack, and Captain L. N. A. Mackinnon, Coldstream Guards, "also a very valuable officer", who was killed during the flight of the fugitives from the mountain top in the early hours of November 6. The German losses were estimated at about eighty killed and wounded, including thirteen Europeans, among them being their commander, Captain Schipper, who was killed.

It is time to turn from these successful operations under Brigadier-General Cunliffe, for which he was given his C.M.G. in the following New Year Honours list, to the second and decisive advance of the Allies' main forces along the road and railway from Edea on Yaunde, where the Germans were still making some show of maintaining their seat of government. Progress in the coastal region after the operations described on p. 63 had been stopped by the rains from June to September, but the advent of dry weather in the autumn of 1915 brought with it the vigorous prosecution of the campaign in the sphere in which the colony's fate was destined to be sealed. Major-General Dobell left nothing to chance in providing for the security of the lines of communication in this difficult region, a blockhouse, garrisoned by from fifty to a hundred men, being established every 30 miles or so. This was essential to the safety of the various columns, but it was also an increasing tax on the fighting strength of the scattered forces, from which heavy toll was steadily taken, not only by the enemy, but also by malaria, blackwater fever, and other diseases of the tropics.

On October 8, 1915, the British column under Lieutenant-Colonel A.

H. W. Haywood, R.A., met the enemy in considerable force at Wum Biagas, about midway between Edea and Yaunde, and 10 miles south of the Sanaga River. The enemy was strongly entrenched, but after a severe engagement lasting 30 hours he was soundly beaten and his position captured. In this affair and the energetic pursuit which followed we had between fifty and sixty casualties, including a number of officers killed or wounded. Here, as elsewhere, our native troops, recruited in the several colonies or districts to which the respective regiments belong, proved first-rate fighting men, "remarkably steady and courageous", as an officer attached to this column wrote in a letter quoted in the *Morning Post*.

"The 1st Nigerians are Hausas," he added—"big, strapping fellows, very black, and rather appalling to look at, owing to their custom of tattooing the face with hideous and fantastic designs. The tattooing is not done in the comparatively gentle nautical fashion with a needle, but with a knife, which leaves deep gashes in the features. Cheeks, forehead, nose, chin, and neck are ornamented in this way. The head is either shaved clean or odd little top-knots are left, somewhat like those of a circus-clown! The field uniform consists of a green fez, khaki shirt, 'shorts', and puttees. A woollen cape and a blanket roll are carried on the back. They are armed with the 303 Lee-Enfield rifle, with sword-bayonet.

"They take their fighting very seriously, and when they go into action they have a peculiar way of stamping their feet in a sort of rhythm, at the same time giving vent to the most blood-curdling and ferocious war chants! If properly led they will do anything and go anywhere: they are in many respects like great schoolboys, and everything depends on the courage and coolness of their white officers."

The white officers are all drawn from the Regular regiments of the British Army, and, needless to say, get the very best out of their men. Their adventures, if they ever come to be written, would fill a whole library of thrilling romance. The march of every column was one long series of adventures, as the troops cut their way sometimes for weeks through almost impenetrable bush, fording rivers knee to waist deep in which lurking crocodiles varied the attacks of Huns, mosquitoes, flies, and huge ants, and never knowing how far or near the cunning and unscrupulous enemy might be. A good idea of these ever-present dangers and hardships is conveyed in another letter published in the *Morning Post*, this time from an officer of a Gold Coast regiment, whose force was detailed to clear the left flank of Colonel Haywood's column, which, as we have just seen, had captured Wum Biagas on the road to Yaunde. The advance of this officer's regiment, after it had encountered all the foregoing adventures, took them down the side of a mountain, with a precipice falling sheer into unknown depths, along a path at an angle of 45 degrees, and 4 to 5 inches deep in greasy mud. The troops succeeded in getting down this after eight strenuous hours, and losing some twenty loads over the precipice; and found themselves at midday, with sounds of firing on their right, facing a river, fordable at one small spot, with a steep high bank on the opposite side. Here, through the trees, the

GERMAN COLONIES IN
THE PACIFIC
AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR, 1914
English Miles
0 100 200 300 400 500
Marcus
Tropic of Cancer
Rosa I.
Los Jardines
Farallon de Pajaros
Lindsay I.
Wake I. (U.S)
Pagan
Marianne or Ladrones
Alligator
Taongi
Gaspar Rico
Bongerik
Radack
Bikini
Bikar
Enjwetok (Brown)
Wotho
Likieb I.
Seypan
Rota
Tinian
German
Spanish I.
Guam (U.S.)
Anson I.
Farallep
Ulithi
Philippine Islands (United States)
Yap
Fais
Sorol
Faroulep
Ujelang
Marshall Archip.
Ralick Chain
Lydia
Pikebot
Namoluta
Namuliparane
Mowlem (Hall I.)
Oceanic
Malgelab Haven
Auch
Majeru
Odia
Arno
Mille (Mulgrave I.)
Jahutt
Knox I.
Namorik
Ebon or Boston I.
Valan (Kusak) I.
Nukuor (Mortlock I.)
Ngarik
Pingelap
Makil
Ascension
Ponapi
Pakin
Oualuk
Truk (Rogolu)
Tamatam
Lamotrek
Swede
Puluwat
Raphael
Sonsorol Is
Wolea
Ngole
Babelthuap
Pelew or Palaos Is
Caroline Islands
St Andrew I.
Sonsenol (German)
Lord North
Talour I.
Modura Str.
Merir
Hayden
Gilolo or Halmaheira
St David
Waigiou
Moluccas Islands
Obi
Misool
Ceram
Amboyna
Banda
Kei Is
Dobbo
Arrou Is
Timor Laut
Pr. Frederik Henry I.
Flinders R.
Wetter
Sermata
Timor
Arafura Sea
Anchorer Is
Echiquier Is
Matthias
Greenwich I.
Atlantic I.
Nauru (Pleasant I.)
Makin
Apia
Tamana
Kuriu
Gilbert Is. (Brit)
Marakei
Paanopa
Nonnuti (Sydenham)
Taputeuea
Brummond
Byron
Onoatoa
Arorai
Nameless I.
Howland I.
Baker I (U.S.)
Equator
Christmas I.
Fanning I. (Brit.)
Palmyra (Br.)
Kingman Sh.
Caldew
Central Polynesian Sporades
Hermit Is
Manus
New Hanover
New Mecklenburg (New Ireland)
Bismarck Archip.
Astrolabe B.
Rabaul
Albgarris or Pearl I.
Le Maire
Ontong Java
Bougainville
Buka
New Pommern (New Britain)
Choiseul
Simbo
New Georgia
Pavuvu
Woodlark I.
Gera
Solomon Is
Isabel I.
Malayta (Br.)
Rennell
Bellona
Rauro
S. Christoval
Indispensable
Ng Pasquale
Ontong Java
Nanumea
Nanumaga
Nukufetau
Funafuti (Ellice)
Lagunes or Ellice Is. (Brit)
Nukulaelae
Atafu Is.
Tokelau or Union Is (British)
Dudosa
Manahiki
Humphrey
Danger I.
Rocky I.
Fakaofo
Swain
Nassau I
Suwaroff Is (British)
Rotumah
Savaii (Gp.)
Upolu
Uea or Wallis
Futuna
Tutuila
Niua-fu
Rose
Nanua
Boscawen (US)
Kingdom
Samoa or Navigator Is
Palmerston I.
Aitutaki
Harvey I.
Hervey or Cook Is.
Rarotonga
Hamond (British)
New I.
Phœnix Is
Mc Kean I.
Sydney
Enderbury
Phœnix
Gardner
Hull
S. Agostino
Mary
Ocean I.
Kennedy I.
Sta Cruz or Charlotte
Nitendi
Ts. (British)
Anuda
Fataka
Louisa
Tucopia
Lord Howe I.
Banks Is
Mai wo
Aurora
Ambrym
Api
Efat
Malekula (Fr)
Espiritu Santo (Britd)
New Hebrides
Vanua Levu
Viti Levu
Kadavu Group
Ngaloso
Onaseau
Levuka
Bau
Rewa
Tonga or Friendly Is.
Kandavu
Varba
Tongatabu
Eua
Namuka
Vavao
Hapai
Savage I.
Beveridge
Fiji Is (British)
Somosomo
Nukualofa
Pylotaart
Loyalty Is
New Caledonia
Port de France (Noumea)
Wilpole I.
Tropic of Capricorn
H.M.S. Minerva
Torres Str.
Melville I.
Port Darwin
Wessel Is
C. Arnhem
Gulf of Carpentaria
Arnhem Land
Queen Chan.
Wyndham
Victoria
Roper R.
Wellesley Is
Hall Creek
Stuart Cr.
NORTHERN TERRITORY
Cape York Pen.
Coen
Coen R.
Mitchell R.
Flinders R.
Burketown
Normanton
Gilbert R.
Lihou Reef
Townsville
Port Denison
Bowen
Concurry
Hughenden
Central Mt Stuart
Townsend
Rockhampton
Fitzroy R.
Longreach
Bird I
South Bellona
Great Sandy
Hervey B.
QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA
CORAL SEA
Polynesia
Chang-shan-tao
Teng-chan fu
Lun-kou
Island
Fu-shan-hsien
Chi-fu
Wei-hai-wei (British)
Cheng-shan
Yang-cheng-hsien
Chao-yuen-hsien
Ar-shan
3200
Lai-chan-fu
Ning-hai-chan
Wen-teng-hsien
Tsi-hsia-hsien
Song-kou-kou
Laiyang-hsien
Weihsien
Chang-lo-hsien
Ping-tu-chau
Tsing-hai-wei
Hai-yang-hsien
Ting-tse-tswi-kou
Ngan-kiu-hsien
Tu-mo
Kiao-ming
Kiao-chau
(Kian-chou)
Lan-shan
Kiao-chau Bay (Ger.)
Chao-lien-tao
To-lo-shan
Shi-chao-hsien
English Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
120
122
36

GERMAN COLONIES IN
WEST AFRICA
AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR, 1914
English Miles
0 100 200
Longitude East of Greenwich
FRENCH WEST AFRICA
BRITISH WEST AFRICA
GOLD COAST COLONY
ASHANTI
NORTHERN TERRITORIES
TOGOLAND
DAHOMEY
BENIN
YORUBA
NIGERIA
SOKOTO
BORGU
GURMA
MOSSI
HAUSA
BORNU
KANEMBU
ADAMAWA
CAMEROON
BIGHT OF BENIN
BIGHT OF BIAFRA
GULF OF GUINEA
Slave Coast
Mouths of the Niger
SPANISH GUINEA
Prince's I.
St Thomas
GABUN
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
BELGIAN CONGO
LAKE CHAD
BAGIRMI
WADAI
CHAD TERRITORIES
OSHEBA
OKOTA
Kano
Sokoto
Zaria
Katsina
Bauchi
Yola
Lokoja
Abeokuta
Ibadan
Kumasi
Accra
Lagos
Calabar
Victoria
Buea
Duala
Edea
Jaunde
Yaunde
Libreville
Loanda
Ngola
Loanda
Kuka
Dikwa
Gulfei
Fort Archambault
Fort Crampel
Fort de Possel
Nokoangha
Libenge
Coquilhatville
Lukolela
Bonga
Bumba
Boma
Matadi
Leopoldville
Kinshasa
Stanley Pool
Stanley Falls
Victoria Falls
Lake Tanganyika
Lake Mweru
Lake Bangweolo
Lake Nyassa

officers could just make out a blockhouse half concealed in the bush, but as no attempt was made to fire on them they began to think the place had been evacuated by the enemy in order to concentrate against the main force at Wum Biagas. Happily they decided to make sure by a preliminary search with their small mountain gun and two machine-guns. At once the danger stood revealed, a furious salvo of fire opening not only from the loopholes of the blockhouse, but also from hidden trenches lining the bank and both flank and rear of the position.

Such an ambush was only possible in a country where, as the correspondent pointed out, it was impossible to see or scout your flanks. Knowing they were trapped they dropped like logs, for their side of the river had been made "as clean as a new pin", all the trees and brushwood having been cleared away.

"After we had taken our breath we came to ourselves again and fired like the deuce at their positions, which we could only distinguish by the bursts of flame from their rifles. As soon as we got their range their firing went to pieces and their shots commenced to fly high. If they had only shot straight enough to hit a haystack I should not be here to tell the tale. However, in the first fifteen minutes our men dropped like flies, and one poor devil was shot through the eye and killed as dead as a door-nail only two yards away from me."

Presently men were sent out to sweep the enemy from their flanks and rear, "and after a jolly good scrap lasting four and a half hours they cleared out entirely, leaving the place in our hands".

It was in just such a "jolly good scrap" that Captain J. F. P. Butler, of the same regiment, won his Victoria Cross, when, with only thirteen men, he attacked and defeated 100 of the enemy; also capturing a machine-gun and many loads of ammunition.

While the British contingents were pursuing the defeated Germans along the motor road from Edea to Yaunde, the French column under Colonel Mayer was advancing in the same direction along the railway line, coming into collision with the enemy on several occasions, and inflicting heavy losses on him. By November 17, 1915, the French had won through to Mangeles, and by December 17 our troops had fought their way to open country. It was now apparent that the enemy's strength was becoming exhausted. Cut off from munitions, supplies, and reinforcements by the effective blockade of the whole Cameroons coast, the Germans could only impede, without staying, the determined progress of the Allies, who gradually encompassed the foe in the comparatively elevated area about Yaunde, where Brigadier-General Cunliffe's column also threatened them from the north, General Aymerich's Franco-Belgian columns from French Equatorial Africa in the east and south-east, and another column from the French Congo, under Lieutenant-Colonel Le Meillour, in the south.

Realizing that further resistance was futile, Colonel Zimmerman, the German Commander, with Ebermaier, the Governor, and Government officials, fled from Yaunde before it was too late, and practically the whole defence

of the colony collapsed. They evidently left Yaunde none too soon, for the official announcement that the British force under Colonel E. H. Gorges, D.S.O., had occupied that town on January 1, 1916, added that our troops were in contact with the German rearguard, the enemy having retreated towards the south and south-east. During the first week in January other Allied columns began to arrive in Yaunde from the north and from French Equatorial Africa. "It is, I think, remarkable," wrote Major-General Dobell, "that troops that had fought and marched for a period of seventeen months should have converged on their objective within a few days of one another."

Guarding the Road between Duala and Yaunde: a corner of one of the military posts established by the Allied troops

The command of the Allied troops at Yaunde was taken over by General Aymerich, the military commander in French Equatorial Africa, who, with the French Governor-General Merlin, had meantime arrived by gun-boat at Duala, where he had been received by General Dobell. Having made arrangements with General Dobell for the pursuit of the enemy from Yaunde, General Aymerich dispatched columns of troops to the west, south-west, and south of that place with the object of cutting him off from Muni (Spanish Guinea).

On January 3 the main British column, together with French columns under Colonel Mayer, were directed on Ebolowa, 100 miles to the south, the last important post that the Germans might hold before reaching Spanish territory. Another strong British column under Colonel Hay-

wood was moved towards Widimenge, 25 miles to the south-west, reaching Kolmaka, on the Njong River, on January 8, and releasing there some twenty or thirty European prisoners, including several French officers and non-commissioned officers. German troops, apparently, were still in possession of Akonolinga, to the east of Yaunde, and on January 10 General Aymerich dispatched a column to reinforce Colonel Haywood, while the advanced troops of Brigadier-General Cunliffe from the north, who had reached Yaunde under Colonel Webb-Bowen, were directed on Edea.

Fighting was also reported farther south, close to the German-Spanish border, where two small French columns were advancing from the coast and from the French Congo to prevent the escape of the Germans into their last refuge on the Atlantic shores. The slippery Germans, however, proved as elusive as De Wet in the great drives with which Lord Kitchener brought the South African War to a close. By January 18, reports were received from Colonel Mayer and Colonel Haywood that the enemy had evacuated both Ebolowa and Akonolinga, and that the German Governor and Colonel Zimmerman had made good their escape across the Spanish frontier. By February 6, 900 German and 14,000 native troops were officially stated to have taken refuge in the same neutral colony, where the Germans were at once disarmed by the Spanish authorities. Subsequent advices showed that the number of German soldiers had been increased to 2600. Not the least humiliating part of the evacuation for the Germans was the fact that the ex-Governor Ebermaier had to send his message (in French) informing the German Government of his retreat, through Major-General Dobell. His telegram, dated January 17, 1915, was to the following effect:

"*To the Minister of Colonies, Berlin.*

"Want of munitions compels me to leave the Protectorate and cross over into Spanish territory, together with all troops and staff. All the sick and wounded are in safety. The troops began to cross the frontier on the evening of the 4th. The first detachments reached the coast yesterday. The Spanish Government desires to transport to Fernando Po all those coming from the Protectorate. Negotiations on the details of internment are not yet completed. This report is written *en route.*

"EBERMAIER."

It was subsequently announced that the Spanish Government arranged to transfer their uninvited guests to Spain, with the object of interning them at Cadiz until after the war, Germany agreeing to defray the expenses after the declaration of peace. In the meantime the net which had been spread as far as possible over the Cameroons by the Allied columns gathered up a number of scattered parties of the enemy, making many prisoners in the process, and receiving the surrender of numerous deserters fully armed. The last post to hold out was the German garrison on the isolated crest of Mora Mountain, in the far north, within a hundred miles of Lake Chad. For a year and a half the garrison on this inaccessible height has been cut off from the rest of the world, blockaded

on one side by a detachment of the French column which marched to the south from Fort Lamy under Lieutenant-Colonel Brisset, and on the other side by a detachment of Nigerian troops.

On February 18, 1916, the Mora garrison capitulated, and the conquest of the great German colony of the Cameroons was at length complete, Mr. Bonar Law, as British Secretary of State for the Colonies, thereupon telegraphing his warm congratulations to Major-General Dobell, to Brigadier-General Cunliffe, and to all the forces under their respective commands. The Prime Minister, speaking on behalf of the House of Commons, had already acknowledged with gratitude and admiration "the extremely able measures which have been taken by our own General, General Dobell, and by the French General, and the magnificent courage and resource shown by the troops both of our own and of the French army". To which we would add a similar tribute to those gallant Belgians who shared with them the hardships and dangers of the campaign. A detachment of these Belgian troops effected a junction with the Franco-British forces at Yaunde on January 28, when the flags of the three nations were hoisted over the fortress, and military honours rendered. On the following night the blockade of the Cameroon coast was completely raised.

Thus was brought to a triumphant conclusion an arduous campaign which in ordinary times would have been followed with intense and world-wide interest. The enormous difficulties entailed by the vast area to be covered, the appalling geographical features of the country, and the thoroughness of their own defensive organization had inspired the Germans with the confident belief that though they could not repel the invaders they could safely hold out in their various fastnesses until the fate of the Cameroons had been decided in other theatres of war. The early disasters at Garua and elsewhere had served to strengthen that belief; but from that time onward the campaign had turned steadily in the Allies' favour, the courage and tenacity of all the troops, and the excellent organization of all the operations, at length assuring the success of what Mr. Asquith described as "one of the most satisfactory and complete expeditions so far in the history of the war". In recognition of his valuable services in this connection Major-General Dobell, C.M.G., D.S.O., received the further honour of K.C.B.

East Africa, where the struggle was still proceeding, was now the only colony left to Germany. The total extent of the conquered area, including the Cameroons, Togoland, and South-West Africa, as well as Kiao Chau in China, and the German islands in the Pacific, was officially estimated in March, 1916, in round figures, at 751,000 square miles.

F. A. M.

CHAPTER V

THE RUSSIAN FRONT IN THE WINTER OF 1915–16

Meisagowla and the Last Stand of the Russians in 1915—Reorganizing the Line—Limits of the German Advance—The Three Sectors of the Line: Riga, Pinsk, Galicia—General Ivanoff and the Sectors south of the Pripet—The Russian Winter Operations—The Galician Advance in December–January—Hindenburg's Position—Defence of Riga—The Russian Opening of the 1916 Campaign South of Dvinsk.

MEISAGOWLA, a name little heard or repeated in England before 1915, is the village and the battle which marked the turn of the tide in the German campaign against Russia in 1915. It was here that General Everts, commanding the middle group of the Russian armies, sent his reserves forward to hold up the last and biggest thrust of Von Hindenburg which was to smash through the apex of the Vilna salient while cavalry outflanked them. The attack was entrusted by Marshal von Hindenburg to General Eichorn; and the struggle at Meisagowla, which lasted ten days and on which turned the fate of half a million Russians within the salient, was one of the most desperate of this bloody war. General Ruzsky had sent two Divisions of the Russian Guard from Petrograd to stiffen the front at Meisagowla, and these bore the brunt of the German onset. It was only when they were broken that Everts ordered a retirement, and by that time the retreat of the main Russian army was secured, for he was able to march it out of danger, corps after corps, through a protecting corridor of troops between the Vilia River and the railway from Vilna to Lida. After the Germans had battered their way through at Meisagowla at very severe loss to themselves, it was five more days before they reached Vilna. The battle had lasted from September 2 to September 12; the retreat of the Divisions of the Russian Guard never became a rout, and when the Germans entered Vilna the town, which is the capital of Lithuania, had been cleared.

The Germans got no farther. Von Hindenburg had sent Scholtz to make a dash for Lida, and he got there two days after Eichorn had reached Vilna, but he caught no retreating Russians, for they were not going his way; and Eichorn found the roads to Minsk blocked by fresh troops. Farther south Prince Leopold of Bavaria's armies reached the railway junction of Baranovitche on September 28 and halted there. Marshal von Mackensen, after pushing into the disconcerting maze of the Pripet Marshes, withdrew his forces behind the Oginski Canal, and entrenched them about Pinsk. His command passed into the hands of Linsingen; and Mackensen went on to organize the Serbian drive in concert with the armies of Bulgaria.

His departure marked even more definitively than the counter-attack by Everts on Eichorn and on the German cavalry at Smorgon the abandonment, voluntary or involuntary, on the part of the German Higher Command of the attempt to go farther. The Russians were receiving at the end of September reinforcements and ammunition; the Germans, if no "decision" in the strict military sense had been reached, had at any rate removed for a period which must last through the winter and the spring, the possibility of a Russian advance of any weight. They were safe then in digging themselves in, and in treating the Russian front from the Baltic to the Bukovina as one which could be held by comparatively reduced numbers while their efforts were concentrated elsewhere. These efforts were, in fact, made successively on the Serbian front and on the Western front; and the Germans were right in assuming that no offensive action on the part of the Russians could assume enough importance to interfere with either of these projects. It is not so certain that they were right in their estimate of the task of holding the Russians tight along that long line which comprised the Riga-Dvinsk section, the unhealthy Pripet section, and the section from the Pripet to the Dniester wherein the Russians had never been severely handled. In two out of the three sectors it is fair to assume that the wearing-down process by irregular fighting and by the severities of winter cut down the German forces faster than the Russian.

Reinforcements for the Army of the Tsar: Russian troops mustering in Siberia

The sector from the Pripet down to the Dniester remained under the command of General Ivanoff through the winter till April, 1916, when he re-

signed for reasons of health which were probably more real than such reasons sometimes are, and handed over the command to General Brussiloff. Ivanoff pertinaciously harassed Linsingen, whose troops, mixed Austrian and German, were not so good as those of the Hindenburg group, and after a success at Trembovla in the middle of September pushed on towards the River Strypa. Here, on October 11, he hit the Austrian commander, General Bothmer, hard at Hajvorowka, and drove him across the river with the loss of many prisoners. He had previously sent a flying column on the heels of the more northerly German army falling back out of the Pripet region, and had temporarily occupied Lutzk or Luck, a valuable and well-fortified bridgehead. This, however, he could not hold in the face of strong German reinforcements, and his column fell back on its main body, which remained in possession of all the strip of Galicia east of the Strypa.

During the earlier winter months the greater part of the Russian activity was on this part of their front. The forces in the Riga district maintained a condition of hard-won equilibrium with those of Hindenburg. Those in the middle sector had less difficulty in remaining on an equality with the German forces, because the Pripet Marshes gave no opportunity of an advance in strength on either side, and lent a slight superiority to those who, like the Russians, were better acquainted with the local conditions, and could turn to better account their adaptability to guerrilla warfare. The marshes are frozen entirely in very unusual winters only; in that of 1915–16 they remained partially or lightly frozen so as never to be available for the passage of large bodies of troops or artillery. The Russians organized miniature flying columns of men, volunteers for the most part, who

Map illustrating General Ivanoff's operations south of the Pripet Marshes and in Galicia

harassed and raided at every convenient opportunity. Their exploits seldom appeared in dispatches, though one notable occasion, when they raided the temporary head-quarters of a German force and succeeded in capturing the commander and part of his Staff, was recorded; they did a great deal to render the German positions uncomfortable, if uncomfortable is strong enough a word. Farther south, Gene-

ral Ivanoff's forces maintained throughout an initiative which had never been entirely lost to them, even in the painful retreat from the Carpathians and the Dniester.

From the Pripet Marshes to the Roumanian frontier the irregular front controlled by Ivanoff's armies was 250 miles long. It may conveniently be considered as having been divided into three zones. The most northerly was that stretching from the Pripet down to the watershed of hills which divides that river from the rivers flowing south into the Dniester.

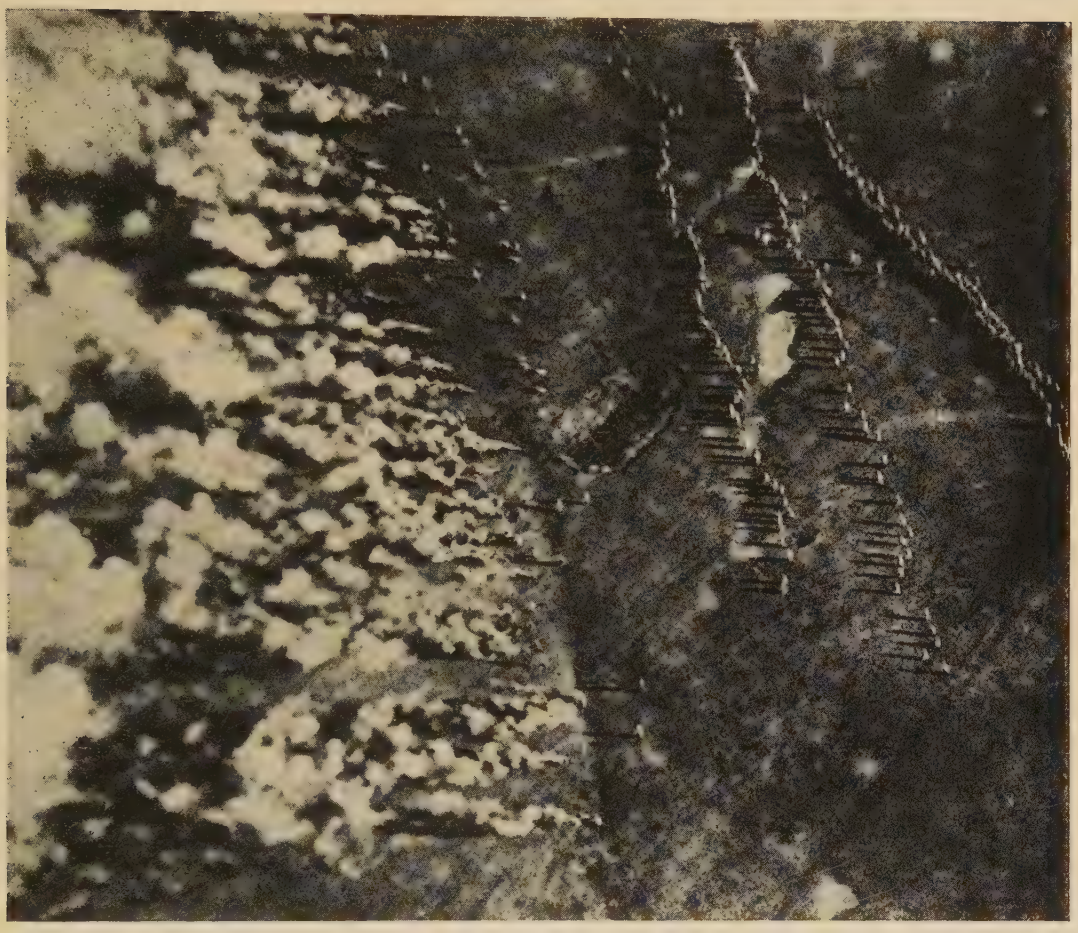
The second included these tributaries, of which the most important was the Strypa. In this zone are Tarnopol, a junction on the railway to Odessa; Trembovla, on a branch line running south; Brzezany and Bucacz, also railway stations, and the second of them on the Strypa; and Usciezka, which was a very important bridgehead on the Dniester held by the Austrians.

The third or Bessarabian sector was in the ground which the Russians held in that part of the Bukovina which lay between the Dniester and the Roumanian frontier. The ostensible point at which the Russian forces concentrated here were aiming was Czernowitz: the strategic object was to extend their line to the Roumanian frontier.

Against the armies of Ivanoff were Austrians, who were stiffened by Germans as soon as these could be spared from the Serbian expedition. The principal German contingents were in the most northerly part of the triple sector. The Archduke Ferdinand held the lateral railway which runs east to west on the south of the Pripet Marshes, cutting the rivers Goryn and Styr in succession at Sarny and at Khriask, which is just north of Chartorysk; and then going on through the town of Kovel. This was a very important stretch of line to keep. South of this Generals Puhallo and Boehm-Ermolli were entrenched with the 1st and 2nd Austrian armies on the Styr guarding Lutzk. General Bothmer held all the line of the Strypa through Bucacz. Finally, General Pflanzer with the 6th Austrian army was responsible for holding the Dniester and the Bukovina frontier.

It was here that the Russian commander launched a determined attack just after Christmas of 1915. The fighting continued through the New Year till the end of the first week in January. It was specially fierce at Taporontz, or Toporovce, and the Russians made considerable gains of ground in fighting their way towards the heights covering Czernowitz on January 2 and January 4. Fighting went on at intervals during January, and was renewed during February.

At the same time that the movement towards Czernowitz was made, a Russian column advanced in the most northerly section of General Ivanoff's *terrain* along the Sarny-Kovel railway. It drove in the extreme northern outposts across the Styr, and seized the village of Khriask (January 1) on the west bank. A few days later the Russians stormed the village of Chartorysk, and held it against all the counter-attacks launched to deprive them of it. They had thus possessed



What a Gas Attack looks like from the Air: view over the German trenches from a Russian aeroplane on the Eastern Front

The clouds of poisonous gas are issuing from the cylinders in the German front line, and blowing towards the Russian trenches. In the background are three lines of German infantry—the sun throwing their shadows in front—waiting to charge when the gas fumes have done their work.

themselves of a considerable stretch of bridgeheads on the Styr, and were in a position to threaten Kovel. In the zone below this, that of the Strypa, the Russians were equally successful. They cleared the whole of the river's eastern bank of Austrian troops down to its junction with the Dniester except at Bucacz, where the enemy continued to hold a strong bridgehead. This clearance had the effect of interrupting railway communications between Bucacz and Czernowitz. To the south and west of the point where the Strypa falls into the Dniester the powerfully-fortified bridgeheads of Usciezka and Zaleczyki remained in Austrian hands till late in the spring. A fierce attack was made by the Russians on Usciezka in January, and they appeared to be in complete possession of it; though an Austrian *communiqué*

The Supreme Commander of the Russian Army: the Tsar following the operations of his troops, with an observation officer on his right

reported that it had been recaptured. It was not of much use to either side; and eventually, in March, 1916, the Russians, having blown up 300 yards of Austrian entrenchments higher up the Dniester, succeeded in establishing a bridgehead which for practical purposes rendered the Austrian tenure of Usciezka valueless. The position gained by the Russians was at Michalze, which the Austrians had converted into something approaching a fortress. The Austrian *communiqué* gave a highly-coloured account of the way in which Austrian troops, being blown up here, cut their way through the Russian lines to Usciezka; but it does not seem likely that this account bore much relation to the truth, or that many of the Austrian garrison escaped.

On the Riga front, where Generals Everts and Ruzsky faced Marshal Hindenburg, the task of the Russians was not that of offence, but of so securing their positions as to neutralize the offensive which the Germans continually threatened to undertake in the spring, and in the translation of which into fact some of the best Russian military critics certainly believed. In the autumn the German pressure on Riga had subsided with the failure of the naval attack in the Gulf of Riga, because the first necessity of a success without great loss was that the German left flank should be protected and supported from the sea. Failing that support, an attack from the west on the Riga defences and on those of the Dvina, at the mouth of which the port is situated, offers some serious problems to the most determined assailant. The position may be roughly figured as follows. Turn the left hand palm downwards on the page, so that the thumb and the forefinger, stretched wide apart, both point to the bottom of the page, the thumb to the south-west, the forefinger to the south-east. Riga will be at the fork of the thumb, with the Gulf to the north of it. The thumb will be the River Aa, which, in fact, after running nearly west, with Lake Babit parallel to it, along the coast of the Gulf, crooks round to the south, and loses itself in small tributaries among forests to the east. In the wide corner space between the thumb and the forefinger, between the Aa and the Dvina, is the Tiral Marsh, a very stiff proposition for troops, and a still stiffer one for artillery. The marsh runs almost to the forefinger of the Dvina at Dahlen Island, and there

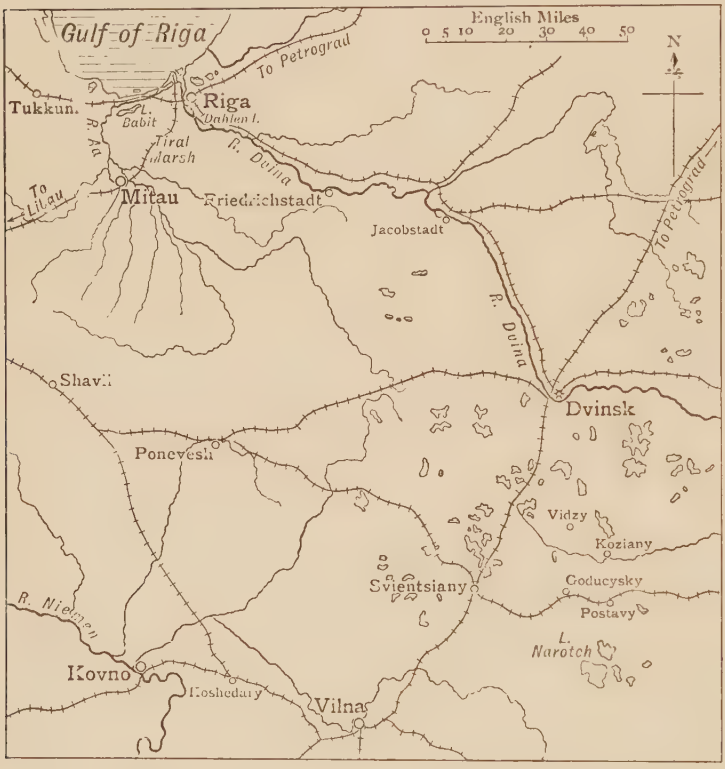
are woods farther south-east at Borkowitz, Lennewaden, and Linden. The main railway from Riga to Dvinsk follows the Dvina. The other railways from Riga run westwards to Tukkum and south-westwards to Mitau. There is, of course, also the railway north-eastwards to Petrograd. Now the coast railway between the Aa and the Gulf being barred to Hindenburg, what was he to do? Evidently he must strike at Riga from the south-east, from Mitau, or from some point farther south.

Up to the end of October, 1915, Hindenburg had a firm hold on both banks of the Aa from Mitau as far as Schlock, which is also on the Riga-Tukkum railway, near the Gulf shore. His line continued bent back to Lake Kangen, which is also near the Gulf. But during the first week of November General Ruzsky, with the help of the fire of Russian warships from the Gulf, pushed back this line till he had got the Germans out of Schlock and the station of Kemmen, next along the railway line to the west. He also loosened Hindenburg's hold on all that part of the Aa which mattered, and made any prospect of a German advance along the coast road extremely remote. The Russians at the end of the month were holding a strong line across the hollow between the thumb and the knuckle of the forefinger. Hindenburg could not therefore get at Riga except below the knuckle.

His first attempts, rather spasmodic, were made to cross the Dvina at Dahlen Island, and still higher up the river at Friedrichstadt, but these met

The Tsar on the Russian Front: His Majesty addressing some of his officers

with no success, and by the beginning of December, 1915, he had parted with any prospect of wintering at Riga. The appearance of activity was never lost, and few days passed without encounter; but the first movement of importance came from the Russian season in this region. The Russian attack, which was made at a number of points along a 70-mile front from Dvinsk to Lake Narotch, through the towns of Vidzy and Postavy, began on March 19, 1916. Its objects were twofold: the chief of them to render useless the German preparations to strike at Dvinsk on the Dvinsk-Riga line; the secondary one to reach the railway junction of Svientsiany if possible, because here the Germans had accumulated large stores of supplies.



Hindenburg's Winter Campaign of 1915–16: map illustrating the Russian operations about Riga and the Lake District south of Dvinsk

The little town of Postavy was the Russian pivot of operations. It is on the railway which runs eastwards from Svientsiany. Through Svientsiany also runs the north-and-south main Petrograd railway, which joins Vilna to Dvinsk, while another branch runs to Poniewitz on the west. If the Germans were intent on pursuing their advertised attack on the Riga section it was clear to General Everts that they were very likely to make their thrust not directly at Riga, but at Dvinsk. Dvinsk in the autumn had proved too hard a nut for the Germans to crack, and the task could not be compassed without railways for ammunition. They had the two lines

side in the short period when the days were lengthening, but the spring floods had not yet come to convert the land into knee-deep mud. The Russian attack was made by General Everts on the lake region south of Dvinsk; but the Germans, as was their praiseworthy military custom, endeavoured to anticipate it by making what may be called the first infantry attack of the

With the Russians on the Eastern Front: a cavalry column on the road

which have been mentioned, the one coming up from Vilna, the other from Libau through Poniewitz, and the two connected by a branch line through Svientsiany. But the Libau line, among other disadvantages, reached the Dvinsk defences at Illutsk, whence it runs close to the Dvina, under fire from the right or eastern bank of the river. It would supply a local attack, but not the big, amply-munitioned attack essential for success. The Vilna line was therefore of vital importance to the Germans, and the Russians were determined to deprive them of its advantages if they could; and it was for this reason that they attacked the German entrenchments, seeking to find a way through them either north or south of Postavy, though the chief attack was directed from the south. The attacks only lasted for about a week, and the Germans triumphantly reported that all had been repelled with "enormous losses" to the Russians. It is certain that there was a great deal of hard fighting, with an interchange of local successes; but the Russians appeared amply satisfied with the results, and this first bleeding of their new formations, joined to the fact that they were well supplied with ammunition, was the best augury of their ability to take the offensive when the later months of 1916 gave the opportunity for it.

E. S. G.

CHAPTER VI

CHAMPAGNE AND THE WINTER CAMPAIGN ON THE FRENCH FRONT

(September, 1915–January, 1916)

The Champagne Battle-fields—Early Struggles in the Great War—The German "Wall of Steel"—General de Castelnau's Objective—French Hopes—Secret Army Orders—General Joffre's Last Words—Opening of the Battle—Marchand and his Gallant Colonials—Elaborate German Defences—Keys of the Position—Effects of the French Bombardment—Brilliant Gains on the Opening Day—Checks which prevented a Decisive Victory—Attack and Counter-attack—Total Gains—King George's Congratulations—Messages from President Poincaré and the French Minister of War—Consolidating the New French Line—Germany's Great Counter-attack—Its Limited Success—Winter Campaign on the Rest of the French Front—Belgian Operations—The Struggle in Alsace—German Preparations for the Grand Assault on Verdun—Attempt to Break Through in Champagne—Some Feints and Minor Successes.

EVER since the Battle of the Marne in September, 1914, the rolling plains of Champagne between Rheims and the Argonne Forest had been the main battle-field of the Allies' line in France, just as Ypres, up to the September offensive of 1915, had been the storm-centre in Flanders. Before the Great War had revolutionized tactics these chalky downs, with their possibilities of concealment in the copses of pine trees planted by Napoleon III, and their grand opportunities for cavalry manœuvres, were marked out as an ideal country for a decisive battle on classic lines, and both sides now fought foot by foot for an opening. But instead of the classic battle, they had perforce to struggle for every inch of ground across two great fortress lines, stretching from end to end, reminding our Allies of nothing so much as the last great siege undertaken by French troops—that of Sebastopol in 1855.

Instead of the irresistible sweep of infantry in the open, and the dashing cavalry charge, it had become a murderous war of explosives, of mining and burrowing underground, and of bayonet work in the trenches. Sooner or later the Germans knew that the French would attempt a tremendous lunge forward at this front, where the army of General Langle de Cary was none too securely placed under the ceaseless pressure of the enemy's centre. The whole region, too, was sacred ground to Frenchmen. It held memories of disaster in the last Franco-Prussian War, but it also embraced the historic village of Valmy, the scene of one of the decisive battles of the world and the first triumph of the republican arms, when, on September 20, 1792, the Prussians and Austrians were forced to retreat before the army of the Revolution. Only a few miles to the west of Valmy were the ancient earthworks of the *Campi Catalaunici*, the scene of another conflict included in Sir Edward Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*—the crushing defeat of Attila and his Huns by the Romans and the allied Franks and Visigoths in 451.

What more appropriate region could have been chosen for France's main attack against the modern Huns on September 25, 1915?

The chalky soil was drenched with the blood of both sides as attack and counter-attack succeeded one another at intervals in the early months of 1915, culminating in the preliminary offensive which, as already described, carried the French lines to Souain and above the sanguinary front of Perthes - Beauséjour. The moral of these hard-won successes was not lost on the invaders, who set feverishly to work to strengthen their defences all along the line. The struggle settled down for months into a war of engineers, both sides converting the whole battle-field into an immense labyrinth of earthworks, with line upon line of intersected trenches, revolving steel cupolas, miniature fortresses, and every other defence known to modern military science.

French Official Photograph

A Miniature Fortress in the German Line: one of the revolving steel gun-turrets in the trenches captured by the French in Champagne

The French artillery-fire had blown this section of the trench to pieces, exposing practically the whole of the turret in its pit.

As along the British front in 1915, the French troops waited through the dreary months of siege warfare with increasing impatience for the hour to sound which was to carry the fight once more into the open. The summer slipped away without the expected onslaught, and the Germans, more and more arrogant and confident be-

hind their boasted "wall of steel", sent jeering messages inviting their opponents to Germany. They ceased their taunts as the guns, like the rolling of mighty drums along the whole Allied front, from the North Sea to the Swiss frontier, at length heralded the battle's approach. None welcomed the signal with keener joy than the patriotic *poilu*, whose ardent spirit was entirely out of tune with the long suspense in the trenches. For a whole week preceding the fateful 25th, the thunder of the guns never ceased. German accounts likened the final bombardment to a volcanic eruption, shaking the land to its foundations, and pouring death and destruction on their trenches until their first-line defences were mangled beyond recognition.

This was true enough up to a point, but even the myriads of shells poured from French guns of every calibre, including the new super-howitzers which the French engineers had strained every nerve to produce in time for the purpose, could not wholly destroy all the vital positions along a front extending over $15\frac{1}{2}$ miles, from Auberive on the left to Ville-sur-Tourbe on the right, bordering the Argonne Forest. General de Castelnau is reported to have demanded of the artillery such a destructive bombardment as would enable the infantry to advance shouldering their rifles. This may have been his expectation at the vital points selected for the main thrusts, but his plans allowed for the resistance of the Germans at each of their dominating fortresses, where experience had proved that frontal attacks were suicidal, no matter how fiercely the guns had prepared the way. Here, as elsewhere along the Western front, the enemy had shown how formidable these bastions could be; how murderously they could hold up a victorious advance of the Allies, even when their line on either flank had crumpled up. General de Castelnau's scheme was to aim first at the lines of least resistance, and having carried these by storm, to attack each centre of defence by a double flank attack from the rear, gripping it as in a vice until it surrendered, or was entirely crushed.

His immediate objective on September 25, 1915, was the Bazancourt-Challerange Railway, the enemy's main line of supply, running, like the Lens-La Bassée railway on the battle-field of Loos, behind the German position, and connected with light field railways feeding every sector of the front. The *poilu*, however, as well as the higher French Command, hoped for far greater ultimate success than this. No soldier in the world takes a more intelligent interest than the French *poilu* in any action in which he is engaged. He has always fought better, as General Joffre said in an intercepted Army Order, when knowing what he is fighting for. Napoleon once complained that his men wanted to know everything. General Joffre recognized the soldiers' rights in this respect in the stirring words of his last Order of the Day before the attack of September 25, as well as in the secret Army Order referred to in an earlier chapter on the Great Offensive in Artois, in which officers of all grades were instructed

to explain to their men the favourable conditions existing for driving the Germans out of France, and so raise their courage to the height of the sacrifice required of them.

Whether this intercepted order—issued after the battle as a German Official wireless report—was genuine or not the Germans were determined not to be outdone in moral preparation for the approaching struggle. It needed no secret order to tell the foe that the long, unparalleled bombardment of his trenches from end to end foreshadowed a stupendous effort on the Allies' part to break right through the German line. When, by publishing Joffre's intercepted Orders, the Berlin wireless sought to minimize the results achieved, the French, after breaking down no inconsiderable part of the "wall of steel", retaliated by revealing the Order addressed to his troops on September 22 by General von Fleck, commanding the Rhenish Corps in Champagne:

"*Armeegruppe Fleck I. A., Nr. 21845, Armeegruppen-Befehl.*

"Comrades,—Let us swear in this solemn hour that each one of us, no matter where he may be, whether in the trenches or in the batteries or in positions of command no matter where, that he will do his duty there and fight to the bitter end. Wherever the enemy may hurl himself to the assault we will receive him with a well-directed fire, and if he reaches our positions we will throw him back at the point of the bayonet and pelt him with hand-grenades. If we have the determination to act in this manner and if we are determined to face death, every enemy attack will be broken by us, and the country may confidently look on this wall of steel constituted by her sons."

It was not without reason that the Germans prided themselves on this formidable wall, upon which they had lavished their military genius ever since they had fallen back with the turn of the tide on the Marne. It was estimated that in this $15\frac{1}{2}$-mile sector of the Champagne line, on an average depth of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, their engineers had completed by September, 1915, something like 400 miles of entrenchments, all deeply excavated, connected by an elaborate system of defence works, and bristling with machine-guns and other weapons of defence. Other fortified lines lay between the front positions and Vouziers, the German head-quarters in Champagne, which General von Kluck vowed, if he could not capture Paris, should never be taken by the French. Vouziers was a strategical prize for the possession of which it was worth making heavy sacrifices. It would press back the Germans to the other side of the Aisne, and isolate the Crown Prince's Army in the Argonne. Hopes therefore ran high when the French Generalissimo's special Army Order was read to the waiting troops, and an extra ration of wine served all round, on the eve of the battle:

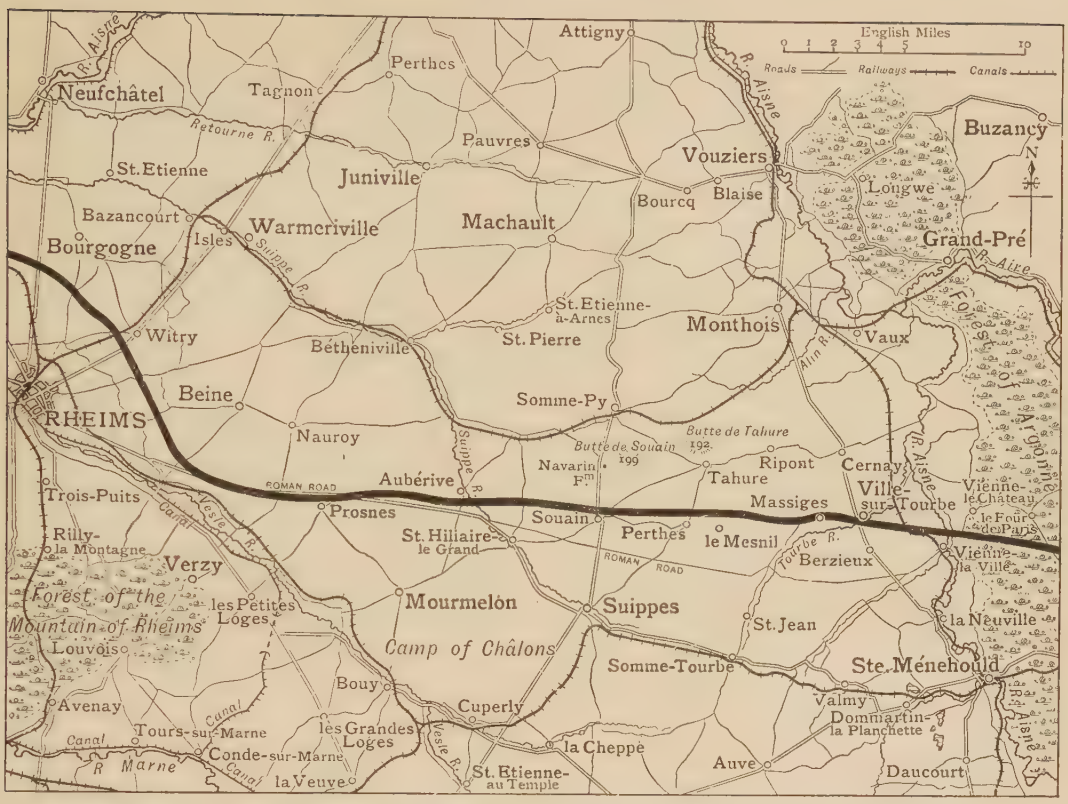
"The offensive is to be pursued without truce and without respite. Remember the Marne. Conquer or die!"

Dawn on the field of Champagne on that memorable September 25, as on the Allies' front in Artois, where the British were already gassing the Germans at Loos, broke damp and misty, with promise of heavy rain as the day wore on. At nine o'clock it was raining hard, but nothing could

quench the ardour of the French infantry as they listened to the officers' final words of instruction. A quarter of an hour later the order was given for the general assault along the whole 15½-mile front, while the artillery lifted its fire to the German rear, playing havoc, in co-operation with a fleet of aeroplanes, with the railway line, communication trenches, and other German defence works.

Amid the smoke and mist of the rain-sodden battle-field it was difficult to follow the successive waves of indomitable troops, in their invisible blue uniforms, their heads protected by their blue steel casques, as they charged across the open with the Marseillaise battle-cry, "To Victory or Death!" Among the first went the dashing Colonial Division from the wooded saucer of the downs in which lies the village of Souain, dominated about 2 miles away by the hillock of Navarin Farm. The Colonials were led by their redoubtable commander, General Marchand, of Fashoda fame—then Lord Kitchener's foe, now his friend—and accompanied in the initial attack by the Moroccan division and a brigade each of Zouaves and the Foreign Legion. The Colonials' objective was the fortified Navarin Farm, protected by intact entrenchments and machine-guns which had escaped the havoc of the bombardment, and whose decimating fire now swept all the No Man's Land in front. The assaulting troops swerved to left and right, but the decimated centre was still struggling vainly when Marchand, cane in hand and pipe in mouth, coolly took his place in front like a simple company commander, and charged at the head of his men. In a few minutes he had fallen, severely wounded with a fragment of shell; but his heroic sacrifice had not been made in vain. Fired by his example, and burning to avenge a leader whom they adored, his troops swept on with an irresistible force which carried one German position after another, until, within an hour, the Navarin Farm was in their possession. Here, however, their progress was checked by the enemy's defences in the Bois Sabot, on the right of the farm, which bloodily repulsed repeated attacks, and forced the French at this point to consolidate the positions won.

Navarin Farm was the key of but one of a whole series of complete centres of defence along these 15½ miles of massed entrenchments and redoubts. On the left was the Epine de Vedegrange, just east of Auberive, where the woods and rising ground afforded every opportunity to the German engineers and artillery to render the position unconquerable. On the right of Navarin Farm, past Souain Butte and Tree Hill—both strongholds of tremendous strength—was the Butte de Tahure, commanding the village of Tahure and some three miles above the scene of the furious fighting early in the year for the ground round Perthes, the whole of which was now seamed with trenches and protected by fortified woods which had their centre of resistance in the Trou Bricot, not inaptly named the Hollow of Death. To the right of Perthes stood another main buttress of the German defence, the



The Battle-fields of Champagne: map showing approximately the French line between Rheims and the Argonne Forest before the great offensive of September, 1915

Butte de Mesnil, where intact wire and concealed machine-guns guarded an immense glacis presenting five successive lines of trenches along a steep slope of 400 feet. This, as will be seen, proved the hardest nut of all to crack on that September 25. To the right again, past what was once the peaceful farm and hamlet of Beausejour—now, like Hooge and so many other storm centres on the Western front, a scene of utter ruin and abomination—stood the most formidable position of all, the plateau and extended hills known as the Main de Massiges. The plateau was the palm of the hand and the outstretched hills the fingers; and so sure were the Germans of their strength at this point that they were wont to boast that it only needed two machine-guns and two washerwomen to hold it.

Such were the main defences of the Germans' steel wall in Champagne. We have seen how Marchand's men broke clean through two miles of it as far as the Navarin Farm. On their left, where deadly woods and a more elaborate network of trenches added to the difficulties confronting the French troops, progress was not so rapid. On the extreme left, indeed, as in the Battle of Loos, where Sir Douglas Haig's troops between the Hohenzollern and the Canal were sacrificed

Drawn by Georges Scott

Honour to the Brave: the colonials' salute on the removal from the battle-field of Champagne of their wounded leader, General Marchand

in vain a few hours earlier on the same Saturday morning, the assailants made practically no advance. On the right, below the Epine de Vedegrange, however, they carried four lines of trenches in succession, advancing from one to one and a half miles until their line linked up with the Colonials' left. Nearly 1000 prisoners were captured in this sector, and a number of guns.

It was in the centre, from Navarin Farm to the Butte de Tahure, that the best progress was made on the 25th. On the right of Marchand's Colonials the native African troops found that the bombardment had done its work thoroughly, and the dazed defenders were too demoralized to offer much serious resistance. At one point the Africans took 2000 prisoners, and added 11 guns, a light field railway, and much munitions and supplies to their spoils. Farther east the Savoy and Dauphiny battalions, advancing from Perthes — first encircling and then carrying in triumph the Bricot "Hollow of Death"—crossed the road from Souain to Tahure, and dug themselves in on the slopes of Hill 193 and the Tahure ridge, having completed by the afternoon an advance of two and a half miles. This was the greatest gain recorded that day. For a time it seemed as though nothing could stop these impetuous Frenchmen, carrying all before them as they broke in successive waves over the battered entrenchments, capturing prisoners by the hundred, guns by the score, and giving, for one brief glorious interval, an opportunity for a few of the cavalry to gallop into action. Two regiments of hussars, lured by the hope that their chance had come at last, followed

up the infantry success by a charge which had for its objective the enemy's batteries north of the Maisons de Champagne. Here, however, the Germans on the right were holding out with grim determination, and caught the cavalry with a withering fire from their machine-guns. At once dismounting, the hussars rushed on foot to the help of the infantry, and joined forces with them in an attack which led to the capture of some 600 prisoners.

The greatest haul was made in the defence works of the Bricot Hollow, where the garrison remained so sure of the impregnability of the front line that several of its officers were found in their underground beds when the victorious assailants swept it into their net by a sudden attack in the rear, as well as upon both flanks. Africans and Bretons had a share in this astonishing *coup*, which resulted in the capture of thousands of prisoners and many guns.

"Our soldiers were out to win," to quote from one of the French official accounts of the battle, "and had imposed their ascendancy upon the enemy. The delight of being in open country again, and of realizing that a great German stronghold was crumbling beneath them, spurred them on to greater efforts, and our generals transferred their advanced posts to the shelter of the captured entrenchments with indescribable joy."

To the right, however, the line of advance was bent sharply back until it left a salient surrounding the village

French Official Photograph

The Armoured Man and the Armoured Trench: French soldiers, wearing their new steel helmets, entering one of the shattered German trenches in the Sabot Wood, Champagne

of Tahure, defended by the Butte de Mesnil, which, with its awful glacis and network of underground defences, resisted every attempt to conquer it, like the vital works of the Hohenzollern Redoubt on the British front. At the Butte de Mesnil the strength of the position was increased by the steepness of the approach. The French had hoped to reduce it by sweeping round its flanks and attacking it simultaneously on all sides; but its flank defences defeated every attempt of the kind during the battle of September 25 and succeeding days. It fell at last on October 6, when the village of Tahure and the heights to the north of it were also carried, thus straightening out the new French line.

East of the Butte de Mesnil, and dominating the extreme right of the battle-field, the most imposing of all the German buttresses, the fearsome Main de Massiges, was stormed on September 25 with a brilliant charge and bombing attack which gave the French troops—another Colonial Division—possession of the plateau forming the palm of the hand. They had cleverly avoided the valleys between the protecting spurs, or fingers, and having won a foothold on the plateau, proceeded to fight for the remainder, foot by foot and trench by trench, until at length, after days and nights of ceaseless combat, the whole fortress finally succumbed.

The double check at the Main and the Butte de Mesnil had, unfortunately, robbed the troops in the centre of the promise of a decisive victory. Thrust through the chink in the armour between these two great strongholds, the French centre had burst through the shattered trenches of the front line and carried position after position in a glorious advance which, like that of the Highlanders at Loos, was destined to be driven back for lack of support. The leading detachments, pouring past the farm of the Maisons de Champagne, captured the heights commanding Ripont and the valley of the Dormoise. With adequate reinforcements they might have won the road to Vouziers, and carried the tide of victory along until it had achieved all that Joffre and de Castelnau in their most sanguine moments had dared to hope from it. Reinforcements, however, could not be sent while the Main de Massiges and the Butte de Mesnil were still holding out, and the battle was raging fiercely all along the line. The Germans had time not only to organize a counter-attack from Ripont before the French could pursue their threatening advantage at this point, but also to push the advanced troops back.

The greater victory was denied our Allies on September 25, but enough had been accomplished to show that the steel wall upon which the foe so boastfully prided himself was not so invulnerable as he supposed. That day the French had succeeded in penetrating the whole 15½ miles to a depth officially estimated at from ⅝ to 2½ miles; 12,000 prisoners had already been counted, and many heavy field- and machine-guns had been captured. In places the enemy, whose *moral* had been badly shaken by the staggering bombardment, surrendered in groups, raising their hands above their heads

and calling out, "Kamarad! Kamarad!" Elsewhere, with undeniable courage, they fought to the last. At certain points their dead bodies literally filled the trenches, so that, as the official account bore witness, "one had to walk over them exposed to the enemy's fire".

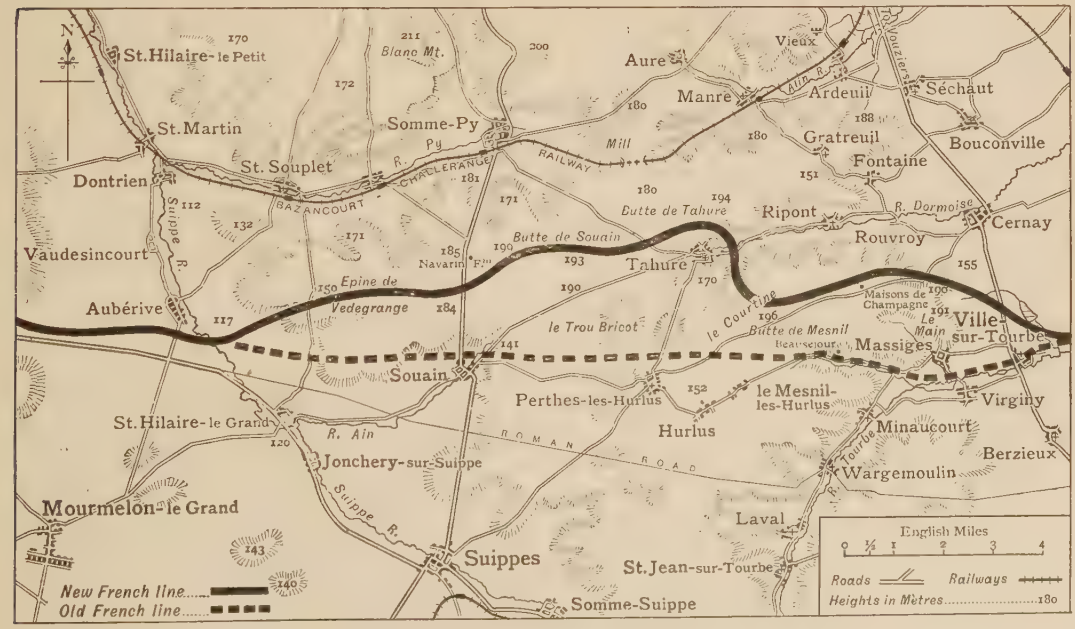
All night long, and for days and nights to follow, the conflict raged incessantly, until practically the whole of the German first line had passed into de Castelnau's hands, and the dogged struggle was resumed in front of the second line. By the end of the month, when the great battle began to wear itself out, the total number of prisoners reached over 23,000, and the number of guns brought to the rear amounted to 79. The total German losses were estimated by the French General Staff, from the best available information, at 140,000 officers and men, including killed, wounded, and captured. Needless to say, these losses were vastly increased before the attacks and counter-attacks of the autumn offensive finally gave place to the old, hideous routine of siege warfare.

It was at this point that King George addressed the following telegram to President Poincaré:—

"Having followed with admiration the magnificent deeds of the French army I take this opportunity, M. le President, to congratulate you, as well as General Joffre and the entire French nation, on the great success won by the valiant French troops since the beginning of our common offensive."

To this M. Poincaré replied as follows:—

"The French Armies and their General-in-Chief will read your Majesty's eulogistic message with profound gratitude and pride. They know how greatly the determined co-operation of the Allied troops, and the



The French Advance in Champagne: map showing approximately the old and new lines at the end of September, 1915

French Official Photograph

Some of the 23,000: a group of German prisoners taken during the battle in Champagne, September, 1915

brilliant offensive of Field-Marshal French, have contributed to the common success of the past few days. I am the interpreter of the whole French nation in expressing to your Majesty, and to the valiant British Army, my warmest congratulations."

The President had already sent his own congratulations to General Joffre and his armies, in a letter addressed to M. Millerand as French Minister of War.

"The magnificent results achieved by our operations in Artois and Champagne," he wrote, "enable us to estimate the extent of the victory just won by the Allied Armies. Our splendid troops have given, in this arduous fighting, fresh proofs of their incomparable ardour, self-sacrifice, and sublime devotion to their country. They have also definitely asserted their superiority to the enemy. I beg you to transmit to the General-in-Chief, to the generals commanding groups of armies and armies, and to all the generals, officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, my warmest and most sincere congratulations."

The French Minister of War forwarded this letter to General Joffre with the following note:—

"My Dear General,

"It is with a heart full of joy that I send you the letter I have just received from the President of the Republic. In communicating it to the troops I beg you to add to it, together with my most hearty personal congratulations, an expression of the admiration and gratitude of the Government of the Republic."

Though too roughly shaken both

here and in Artois to organize at once a counter-attack on anything like a corresponding scale, the Germans had no intention of losing some 15½ square miles of conquered ground without a stern resolve to fling the assailants back. When, on October 6, the French got their teeth into the second line by the capture of the Butte de Tahure, or Hill 192—a tactical point of great importance, commanding the village of Tahure—the enemy made daily attempts to recover both positions by means of violent infantry assaults and preliminary bombardments. Each costly attempt, however, on these occasions, melted away under the defenders' infallible curtain of fire. The loss of such a vital point in the enemy's much-vaunted second line made him cling the harder to the one remaining salient in advance of this position, bounded on the south by the obstinate defensive work known as the Courtine, west of the Maisons de Champagne, and 1¼ miles to the north of Mesnil-les-Hurlus. This German wedge had a front of about 1300 yards and an average depth of 270 yards, consisting of three or four lines of entrenchments connected by subterranean tunnels and communication trenches, all admirably organized for defence and stubbornly held; and it took our Allies a whole month of ceaseless hammering to smash a way in and force its surrender, when 200 prisoners were made. This definitely consolidated the new French line.

Twelve months' work by the enemy over miles of front had thus been brought to nought, but behind all these conquered redoubts and entrenchments were other formidable lines, and before these could be similarly subdued the centre of military gravity had shifted to the Balkans. General Joffre, now Commander-in-Chief of all the French forces, paid a sudden visit to London before the end of October, 1915—his first since the outbreak of the war—with the result, after conferences with Lord Kitchener, Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Balfour, that Britain and France became fully committed to the new campaign in the Near East.

Determined, if possible, to recover their lost ground now that the French general offensive had died down, the Germans mustered on October 30 for a supreme effort to recapture the five-mile section between the Tahure Hill and Hill 193, including the village and trenches to the south as far as and including the Courtine labyrinth. The attack was preceded by a terrific bombardment, and delivered in mass formation by successive waves of fresh troops, brought back in many cases from the Russian front to meet the emergency in the West. Notwithstanding the vigour of the assault, the avalanche of infantry, broken by the fire from the French machine-guns and "75's", was effectually stayed over most of the ground, the Germans, driven back to their trenches, leaving the ground thickly strewn with their dead; but they succeeded in recapturing the summit of Tahure Hill. Fighting in this sector continued with unabated fury, and insignificant success to the enemy. Despite the employment of poison gas, liquid fire, and all his other evil devices, he succeeded,

up to the end of 1915, in recovering only a foothold here and there in his lost front, chiefly in the fiercely contested region between the Courtine and the Butte de Mesnil. Towards the end of the year the "Lion of the Argonne"—General Gouraud—returned to the front, having completely apart from affairs of outposts, along the Belgian front, where King Albert's army was still adding steadily to its strength and efficiency. Early in December the Belgians re-inundated the Yser district, with the result that the Germans lost a number of their advanced posts. The British monitors

French Official Photograph

Heroes of the Champagne Battle: decorating French soldiers for gallant deeds in the great attack

recovered from the wounds received in Gallipoli. He was now given command of one of the armies in the Champagne theatre.

All this time there was little of importance to record along the rest of the Western front, save the obstinate fighting in Artois and elsewhere along the British lines, already described in our earlier chapters. Bomb fighting on the dunes and reciprocal bombardments were the outstanding incidents, were also intermittently active, especially against the German positions at Westende. The French artillery gradually asserted its superiority along most of its far-flung line, and aircraft activity increased with every succeeding month.

On the extreme right of the French front the struggle in Alsace continued to centre in the fight for the sinister slopes of Hartmannsweilerkopf. On December 21, 1915, the French began

a series of operations which, after a week's incessant struggle, ending in a blinding snowstorm, enabled them appreciably to extend their positions from the conquered crest, and to capture 1668 prisoners. With the turn of the year the Germans delivered a series of determined counter-attacks, the other, but leaving the French every month more firmly established in the lost provinces. Here, more than anywhere, the bad weather hampered the operations throughout the winter of 1915–16.

Early in the new year the enemy must already have been hard at work

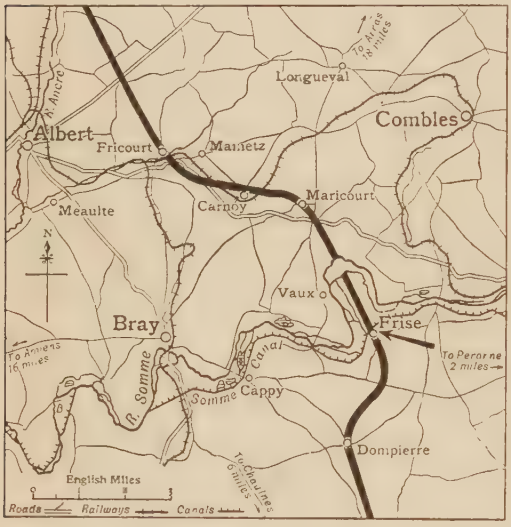
French Official Photograph

"They also serve ——": widows, orphans, and parents receiving decorations in Paris won by fallen heroes at the front

General Cousin is shown conferring war decorations of the fallen at one of the periodical distributions of the kind at the Invalides, Paris, each presentation being accompanied by a brief recital of the heroic deed thus honoured. In the background are two of the captured German biplanes.

in the course of which they claimed to have recovered the lost trenches south of the Hartmannsweilerkopf and captured 20 officers and 1083 chasseurs, besides 15 machine-guns. So the ding-dong combat continued along the mountainous front of Alsace, the swing of the pendulum giving the advantage first to one side and then to preparing the way for the Crown Prince's grand assault on Verdun in the following February. Another great effort to break through in Champagne, extending from December 27 to January 4, with a force estimated at not less than 60,000 men, was probably part of the same deep-laid scheme, and, had it succeeded, might have

sealed that fortress's fate. On this, as on so many previous occasions, the enemy strove his hardest to smash a way through from the Courtine to the Massiges plateau, after a prodigious bombardment followed by a poison-gas attack. Though the Imperial Guard were included in the attack, though as many as four actions were concentrated on this five-mile front,



Map showing approximately the Allies' Line near Albert and the position of Frise on the River Somme captured by the Germans on January 28-29, 1916

"despite also", to quote from the French official account, "the use of asphyxiating gases in great copiousness, and despite the repetition of the same effort no fewer than eight times, the German troops were driven back by the fire of the French guns, after suffering the most appalling losses". They were further punished by the intense bombardment maintained for several days afterwards against various points of the German front, some trenches being destroyed to the west of the Maisons de Champagne, and an entire installation for delivering gas attacks wrecked north of the Navarin Farm, several reservoirs of poison gas being exploded.

Later in the month of January, 1916, other attempts to conceal the Crown Prince's plans in the West were made on the extreme right of the German front, where an attempt to capture the town of Nieuport was frustrated by our Allies' artillery fire; on the Vimy Heights, where the enemy succeeded in straightening out his line on the Western side by a series of small gains at heavy cost; and on the Somme, below Albert, where he scored a local success on January 28–29 by capturing the village of Frise, in the bend of the river towards Dompierre. The main feature of the attacks in Artois was the lavish use made by the enemy of mines. These were obviously the work of months of silent burrowing since the great offensive of September, 1915, four small salients being dug in this way under the French line between the Arras-Lens line, chiefly in the direction of Neuville St. Vaast and the lost village of Souchez. In front of each of these underground salients were driven some six or seven powerful mines, every one of which, exploded immediately before the attack, tore out a crater from 40 to 50 feet in diameter. It was estimated that each mine must have contained from six to eight tons of explosive. After daily fighting at these different points there was a general engagement on January 28 which began with a simultaneous explosion of twenty-five German mines, and a violent bombardment of the

French trenches. Yet for all their prodigious efforts the enemy only succeeded in partially occupying the four small salients so cunningly prepared underground. The most that they gained were the observation posts of the and elsewhere, like the ground above the mined approach to their trenches, had more beneath them than appeared on the surface. They were not the vain spectacular affairs organized, as was too readily believed at the time,

French Official Photograph

After the Battle: French troops in Champagne taking a well-earned rest behind the firing line

French advanced trenches, held with insignificant forces. The real French line, which our Allies had completely consolidated since pushing the Germans back in September, and was shortly to be handed over to their British comrades, remained intact.

All this German activity on the French and Belgian fronts, and sudden attacks on our own lines near Pilkem merely to convince public opinion in Germany and neutral countries that the iron fist was not growing soft. They were deliberate feints made with the object of cloaking as long as possible the mighty concentration of men and guns for the grand assault on Verdun, planned for the following month.

F. A. M.

CHAPTER VII

THE EXECUTION OF NURSE CAVELL

October, 1915

The Mailed Fist in Belgium—Charge against Edith Cavell—Her Life and Lineage—Reign of Terror in Brussels—Edith Cavell arrested—American Legation's Efforts on her Behalf—Trial and Sentence—Hoodwinking the American Legation—Mr. Brand Whitlock's Appeal for Clemency—Vain Efforts of Spanish and American Ministers—Edith Cavell's Last Hours—The British Chaplain's Narrative—An Unforgettable Crime—Memorial Service at St. Paul's Cathedral.

ONE would have thought that even Prussianism would have been satisfied with its twelve months' fruits of frightfulness in Belgium without adding to it the deliberate murder—for it was nothing less—of a gentlewoman who had spent her life in alleviating the sufferings of others, Germans among them. But it is one of the worst attributes of frightfulness, as of every other form of vice, that it grows by what it feeds on; and the utter inability of Prussian militarism to understand why the shooting of Nurse Cavell should have sent a thrill of horror and disgust throughout the civilized world, and called aloud for vengeance, was the most damning commentary on German *Kultur* since the sinking of the *Lusitania*. It made no difference to German judges and governors that the victim was a woman, that she had nursed German as well as Allied wounded back to life, and that the United States Minister had put in a special plea on her behalf, not only in the name of chivalry, but also in that of common humanity. It was enough that Nurse Cavell had, admittedly, broken a military law, and been condemned to death by German Court Martial, where the quality of mercy was unknown. Besides, the Great Offensive of the Allies in Artois and Champagne, which at that time had nearly torn a double rent in the German line, had raised a hope in Belgium that the hour of freedom was at hand, and something was needed to show that the mailed fist could strike as hard and as ruthlessly as ever in King Albert's unhappy land. It suited the military needs of the moment, when the British forced their way to Loos on September 25 while the French pierced the "wall of steel" in Champagne, that the German Governor of Brussels already had under lock and key between thirty and forty of the oppressed civilians, two-thirds of whom were women. There is little doubt that the trial of these prisoners, ending in the secret execution of Nurse Cavell—the one representative of the hated British nation—was part of a cold-blooded plot to terrorize afresh the whole Belgian people.

The charge brought against Miss Cavell was that she had sheltered fugitive British and French soldiers and helped them, as well as some young Belgians, to escape across the frontier into Holland. This, apparently, was freely admitted by Miss

Cavell, who, scorning to conceal anything, furnished her accusers with information which she alone could have given, and probably sealed her fate. She had, it is true, violated a military law, and incurred some penalty, possibly imprisonment until the end of the war. But this was no drum-head court martial on a field of battle. This was Brussels, where, as the British Home Secretary pointed out at the time, the Germans claimed to have established orderly rule comparable with their own government, and to have appointed there a Civil Governor. And their victim was no unknown adventuress, without a claim on their generous consideration, but one who had proved a good Samaritan to many a wounded German since the beginning of the war.

Miss Edith Cavell
Reproduced by courtesy of *The Illustrated London News*

A woman of high ideals and rare unselfishness, Edith Cavell came of an ancient English lineage which included a distinguished admiral in the reign of Henry VII. The daughter of the late Rev. Frederick Cavell, vicar of Swardeston, near Norwich, and brought up in a quiet country vicarage, she had dedicated her life to nursing since joining the profession in 1896, when she became a probationer at the London Hospital. As soon as war broke out in the summer of 1914, when she was staying with her aged mother at Swardeston, she left the security of England and returned to her post of danger in Brussels. Here, from small beginnings, she had established a nursing home with a staff which in 1914 numbered ninety nurses of all nationalities, Germans included, with a surgical hospital and children's ward attached. As soon as the German army entered the gates of Brussels, a few weeks later, she placed the institution and the services of her staff at the complete disposal of Governor von Luttwitz for the care of the casualties among friends and foes alike. Many a wounded and dying German owed her a debt which should not have been forgotten when her own hour of danger arrived.

Beloved throughout Brussels, she devoted much of her time to the poor as well as to the sick, and felt the sufferings of the saddened city in those early months of the occupation with a heart always overflowing with compassion. In a letter written in the

spring of 1915, and quoted in the *Nursing Times*, she sent home a moving account of the subdued and silent streets, once so busy and bustling, where no one now dared to speak to his neighbour lest he should be a spy.

"I am but a looker-on after all," she continued, "for it is not my country whose soil is desecrated and whose sacred places are laid waste. I can only feel the deep and tender pity of the friend within the gates, and observe with sympathy and admiration the high courage and self-control of a people enduring a long and terrible agony. They have grown thin and silent with the fearful strain. They walk about the city shoulder to shoulder with the foe, and never see them or make a sign; only they leave the café which they frequent and turn their backs to them and live a long way off and apart."

Under the oppressive yoke of the invaders the magnificent temple to justice raised by Belgium in its capital was a mockery. The Germans converted it into barracks for their troops, reserving an ever-decreasing section for the courts to administer the travesty of civil law that still remained to them. One heroic jurist, M. Léon Théodor, dared, in the name of all the Bars of Belgium, to utter a noble protest against this treatment before the so-called "German Courts of Justice", ending as follows:—

"We are not annexed. We are not conquered. We are not even vanquished. Our army is fighting. Our colours float alongside those of France, England, and Russia. The country subsists. She is simply unfortunate. More than ever, then, we now owe ourselves to her body and soul. To defend her rights is also to fight for her. We are living hours now as tragic as any country has ever known. All is destruction and ruin around us. Everywhere we see mourning. Our army has lost half of its effective force. Its percentage in dead and wounded will never be obtained by any of the belligerents. There remains to us only a corner of ground over there by the sea. The waters of the Yser flow through an immense plain peopled by the dead. It is called the Belgian Cemetery. There sleep our children by the thousands. There they are sleeping their last sleep. The struggle goes on bitterly and without mercy.

"Your sons, Mr. President, are at the front; mine as well. For months we have been living in anxiety regarding the morrow. Why these sacrifices, why this sorrow? *Belgium could have avoided these disasters, saved her existence, her treasures, and the life of her children, but she preferred her honour.*"

Our extract, taken from the judicial study of "*The Case of Edith Cavell*, by James M. Beck, formerly Assistant Attorney-General of the United States,[1] reveals the tragic atmosphere of Brussels, and some of the results of the reign of terror in Belgium, where the number of non-combatants shot by the Germans were already counted by the thousand. M. Léon Théodor was not shot, but, like Brussels's dauntless Burgomaster, M. Max, was shortly afterwards placed under arrest and imprisoned in Germany for fearlessly defending the oppressed civilian population from a system of tyranny and secret executions which, in their malignancy—to quote the words of Mr. Beck, whose opinion counts as that of a neutral as well as a distinguished lawyer —"should excite the professional jealousy of Danton, Marat, and Robespierre". The Zabern-like spirit of

[1] *The Case of Edith Cavell: A Study of the Rights of Non-combatants* (Putnam's Sons).

the conqueror's rule had been sufficiently shown in the sentence of ten years' hard labour inflicted upon Princess Maria de Croy at Ostend for breaking her umbrella over the shoulders of a German officer who had insulted her.

It was in the midst of this reign of terror that Edith Cavell was arrested, on August 5, 1915, and arrested so secretly that the American Legation, which had assumed the care of British citizens in Belgium since the beginning of the war—just as the United States had taken over the care of German residents in Britain and other Allied countries—was apparently unaware of her danger until the last day of the month. Some information had meantime reached the British Foreign Office, as, on August 26, Sir Edward Grey requested the American Ambassador in London to make enquiries through the United States Legation in Brussels. Five days later Mr. Brand Whitlock, the American Minister to Belgium, wrote to Baron von der Lancken, head of the Political Department of the German Governor-General, to know whether the information was correct which had just reached him to the effect that Miss Cavell had been arrested, and if so to send the necessary authorization to arrange for her defence. The German authorities did not even bother to answer this letter until Mr. Brand Whitlock wrote again on September 10, pressing for a reply by telegram. Even then it was two days later before Baron von der Lancken condescended to answer, and, without a word of apology for the long delay, acknowledged that Miss Cavell had been arrested on August 5, adding that she was being kept in custody in the military prison of St. Gilles, one of the south-western suburbs of the city.

"She has herself confessed", he added, "to having concealed in her residence English and French soldiers, as also Belgians of military age, all desirous of proceeding to the front. She has also confessed to having provided these soldiers with the money necessary for travelling to France, and to having facilitated their escape from Belgium by procuring them guides who enabled them to cross secretly the Dutch frontier."

Mr. Brand Whitlock had asked in his first letter that M. de Leval, Legal Counsellor to the Legation, might be permitted to confer with the prisoner, and if need be entrust someone with her defence. This was declined on the ground that the Governor General, "as a matter of principle", did not allow accused persons to have any interviews whatever. Miss Cavell's defence, it was explained, had been entrusted to a barrister, M. Braun, who had already placed himself "in the hands of the competent German authorities". That was the German way of administering military justice. Even the counsel officially appointed for the defence was not allowed to see the accused before the trial. In point of fact, M. Braun, the Belgian barrister in question, was either unable or unwilling to act for Miss Cavell, handing over the defence to another lawyer named Kirschen. "According to credible information", writes Mr. Beck, "Kirschen was a German by birth, although a naturalized Belgian subject

and a member of the Brussels Bar". At all events, although he is reported, in the words of M. de Leval, "to have made a very good plea for Miss Cavell, using all the arguments that could be brought before the court", he failed to keep the American Legation—the prisoner's one remaining hope—informed of the developments of the secret trial, as promised, and did not even communicate the fact that it had closed on Friday, October 8, judgment being reserved. It was only through "an outsider", on the Saturday, that the Legation learned that the trial had taken place. Everything, indeed, seemed to conspire to keep the Legation in the dark. When, some time before, the American Minister's legal adviser had proposed to watch the case in court he had been immediately dissuaded from doing so by M. Kirschen, on the ground that his presence "would cause a great prejudice to the prisoner, because the German judges would resent it, and feel it almost as an affront".

Could there be any stronger commentary on German justice than this unworthy plea: that the minds of the judges would be prejudiced against a woman on trial for her life by the presence of a representative of the American Government, whose duty it was to look after British interests? From the same unofficial source the following facts were subsequently disclosed to M. de Leval, and set forth in his official report:—

"Miss Cavell was prosecuted for having helped English and French soldiers, as well as Belgian young men, to cross the frontier and to go over to England. She had admitted, by signing a statement before the day of the trial, and by public acknowledgment in Court, in the presence of all the other prisoners and the lawyers, that she was guilty of the charges brought against her, and she had acknowledged not only that she had helped these soldiers to cross the frontier, but also that some of them had thanked her in writing when arriving in England. This last admission made her case so much the more serious, because if it only had been proved against her that she had helped the soldiers to traverse the Dutch frontier, and no proof was produced that those soldiers had reached a country at war with Germany, she could only have been sentenced for an attempt to commit the 'crime' and not for the 'crime' being duly accomplished. As the case stood, the sentence fixed by the German military law was a sentence of death."

What chance was there for any hapless prisoner to avoid such legal pitfalls when the officially appointed counsel for the defence was not only forbidden to interview the accused before the trial, but unable to see any document of the prosecution. It was all very well for M. Kirschen to assure the counsel for the American Legation beforehand that the hearing of such cases was carried out very carefully, and that there was not the slightest danger of any miscarriage of justice, but every lawyer knows how impossible it would be to obtain a fair trial in such arbitrary circumstances, or justice for every case in a simultaneous trial of between thirty and forty prisoners. It was Miss Cavell herself, in her oral statement before the Court, who disclosed practically all the facts of the prosecution.

"She spoke without trembling," we are told on the authority of M. de Leval's unknown informant, "and showed a clear

mind. Often she added some greater precision to her previous depositions. When she was asked why she helped these soldiers to go to England, she replied that she thought that, if she had not done so, they would have been shot by the Germans, and that therefore she thought she only did her

General Baron von Bissing, the German Governor, on the steps of his residence in Brussels. (Behind is an aide-de-camp)

duty to her country in saving their lives. The Military Public Prosecutor said that argument might be good for English soldiers, but did not apply to Belgian young men whom she induced to cross the frontier, and who would have been perfectly free to remain in the country without danger to their lives."

Edith Cavell had seen enough of German militarism to know that she was running grave danger—possibly that she was risking her life—when she helped these refugees to freedom, and she was too proud to plead for mercy; but she was probably ignorant at the time of her offence of the precise paragraph in the German Military Code which was to send her to her doom. "Any person", says paragraph 58 of this Code, "will be sentenced to death for treason who, with the intention of helping the hostile Power or of causing harm to the German or Allied troops, is guilty of one of the crimes of paragraph 90 of the German Penal Code." M. de Leval points out that the case referred to was that of " . . . conducting soldiers to the enemy . . . (viz. 'dem Feinde Mannschaften zufuhrt')".

While admitting that a general and strained construction of this legal language might be applicable to Edith Cavell's case, Mr. Beck affirms with confidence that under this law she was innocent, and that the true meaning of the Code was perverted in order to inflict the sentence of death upon her, military necessity then demanding a victim further to terrorize the subjugated people. His argument —and the voice of a neutral of Mr. Beck's legal standing is of greater weight than the naturally biased opinion of Edith Cavell's countrymen —is that Miss Cavell, yielding to the humanitarian impulses which ruled her life throughout, had simply given shelter to soldiers and in some way facilitated the escape of these and others, not back to the Allies' line, but to Holland. "Holland is a neutral country, and it was its duty to intern

any fugitive soldiers who might escape from any one of the belligerent countries. The fact that these soldiers subsequently reached England is a matter that could not increase or diminish the essential nature of Miss Cavell's case."

Quite apart, however, from the strict letter of the law, none but a ruthless, tyrannical Government would have chosen a woman for its pitiless sacrifice, especially one whose services to the German wounded might, as Sir Edward Grey wrote to the American Ambassador in London, have been regarded as a complete reason in itself for treating her with leniency. Nothing shows more clearly the grim determination of these malevolent rulers to take Miss Cavell's life than their discreditable and too successful efforts to conceal the fact from the American Legation that the death sentence had been formally passed, and would be carried out immediately. The American authorities, to be ready for any eventuality, had prepared a petition for pardon addressed to the Governor-General in Belgium, General Baron von Bissing, who had succeeded to that office towards the end of 1914; but no word reached them officially of the tragic turn of events on Monday, October 11, though positive assurances had been given that the Legation would be fully informed of any developments. It was only through private sources that evening, at 8 p.m., that they learned the truth: judgment had been delivered that very afternoon, and Edith Cavell was to be shot at 2 o'clock the next morning. Unable through illness to attend in person, Mr. Brand Whitlock immediately sent Mr. Gibson, the Secretary to the Legation, to present his appeal to Baron von der Lancken that execution of the sentence should be deferred until the Governor should consider his plea for clemency. Mr. Gibson was accompanied, not only by M. de Leval, but also by the Spanish Minister, Señor Don Alfonso Merry del Val, who was equally anxious to do all that he could, in the name of humanity and chivalry, to save Miss Cavell's life. The purport of the American Minister's letter was an appeal for clemency on behalf of one whose career of humanity, if for no other reason, was of a kind "to inspire the utmost pity and to procure for her the utmost mercy". The most moving part of the appeal was its postscript:

"My dear Baron,

"I am too ill to present you my petition in person, but I appeal to your generosity of heart to support it and save this unhappy woman from death. Have pity on her!

"Yours very sincerely,

"Brand Whitlock."

Bearing this letter the American representatives and the Spanish Minister arrived at the Politische Abteilung, only to find that Baron von der Lancken and all the members of his staff were absent for the evening. A special message was sent to the Baron, asking him to return at once on a matter of the utmost urgency. It was shortly after 10 o'clock when he arrived, followed by two junior members of his staff, Count

Harrach and Herr von Falkenhausen. As soon as he read the note the Baron expressed disbelief in the report that sentence had actually been passed, as well as his surprise that credence should be given to any report not emanating from official sources.

"He was quite insistent", says Mr. Gibson in his report of this interview, "on knowing the exact source of our information, but this I did not feel at liberty to communicate to him. Baron von der Lancken stated that it was quite improbable that sentence had been pronounced, that, even if so, it would not be executed within so short a time, and that in any event it would be quite impossible to take any action before morning."

When it was pointed out that, if the facts were as they believed them to be, action would be useless unless taken at once, he agreed, after some hesitation, to make enquiries. Having, apparently, telephoned to the presiding Judge of the Court Martial, he presently returned to say that the facts were as represented, and that Miss Cavell was to be executed that night. It was in vain that Mr. Gibson emphasized the horror of executing a woman, no matter what her offence was, pointing out that the death sentence had hitherto been imposed only for actual cases of espionage, whereas Miss Cavell "was not even accused by the German authorities of anything so serious"; in vain that the Spanish Minister, with equally chivalrous zeal, led the Baron aside "in order to say very forcibly a number of things which he would have felt hesitancy in saying in the presence of the younger officers and M. de Leval, a Belgian subject; vain also that Mr. Gibson and M. de Leval meantime reminded these younger officers of the untiring efforts of the American representatives on behalf of German subjects at the outbreak of war and during the siege of Antwerp. "I pointed out", adds Mr. Gibson, "that while our services had been rendered gladly, and without any thought of future favours, they should certainly entitle the American Minister to some consideration for the only request of the sort he had made since the beginning of the war". It was all unavailing. There was no hope, said Baron von der Lancken, after finally conferring in person with the Governor-General, Baron von Bissing, to whom a similar letter of appeal had been sent by Mr. Whitlock, though without the personal postscript.

The Governor-General, who alone, apparently, had discretionary powers under German Military Law to accept or refuse an appeal for mercy, seems to have told Baron von der Lancken in this fateful conference "that he had acted in the case of Nurse Cavell only after mature deliberation; that the circumstances in her case were of such a character that he considered the infliction of the death penalty imperative; and that he must decline to accept the American Minister's plea for clemency, or any representation in regard to the matter". The responsibility for the execution rested with the Military Commander of the district, Major-General von Haesler. In these circumstances Baron von der Lancken declared that "even the Emperor himself could not intervene", though

here he was wrong, for the Kaiser, when he saw how the conscience of the whole civilized world was shocked by the execution of Edith Cavell, promptly commuted the death sentence which had been passed upon seven other prisoners at the same trial. This was largely the result of strong representations on the part of the King of Spain and the Pope on behalf of two French ladies among them, who, like Edith Cavell, had been condemned to death for sheltering French and British fugitive soldiers. Had the American Minister's plea for delay been granted it is more than likely that Edith Cavell too might have been spared.

Little more remains to be told of her few remaining hours. While this earnest but unavailing effort was being made to save her life she was preparing for the supreme sacrifice with a steadfast courage and Christian resignation which have inscribed her name for all time among the world's great heroines of patriotism and faith.

At eleven o'clock that Monday morning M. de Leval had called on Herr Conrad, the official in charge of the Political Department of the German Government in Belgium, and asked that permission be granted to the Rev. H. S. T. Gahan, the British Chaplain at Brussels, to see Miss Cavell in jail. This was refused, as was the request that M. de Leval himself might see her, in view of the fact that the trial had now taken place. "He replied", writes the Legation's legal adviser, "that she could see any of the three Protestant clergymen attached to the prison; and that I could not see her until judgment was pronounced and signed, but that this would probably only take place in a day or

In Memory of Edith Cavell: the memorial service in St. Paul's Cathedral, October 29, 1915

two". Herr Conrad's conduct throughout was one of the worst features of the case. This was the man who had repeatedly given positive assurance both to Mr. Gibson and M. de Leval that the Legation would be fully informed as to the developments of the trial—promises, as we have seen, made only to be broken, and afterwards semi-officially denied. Despite these assurances, frequent enquiries had been made in the course of the same day by the Legation officials; but even when sentence of death was secretly pronounced, at 5 p.m., and the execution ordered for 2 a.m. the next morning, the tragic fact was withheld. The Legation's last enquiry was made at 6.20 p.m., more than an hour after judgment had been delivered, and still Herr Conrad had the effrontery to declare—to quote from Mr. Gibson's report—"that sentence had not yet been pronounced, and specifically renewed his previous assurances that he would not fail to inform us as soon as there was any news". As Sir Edward Grey afterwards pointed out, these efforts to conceal the truth were doubtless prompted by the determination to carry out the sentence before an appeal from the finding of the Court Martial could be made to a higher authority, and show in the clearest possible way that the authorities concerned were well aware that the carrying out of the sentence was unwarranted by any consideration.

Before the night was over the Germans relented to the extent of allowing their victim the spiritual solace of a last interview with the British chaplain. Mr. Gahan's simple narrative of the closing scene in that prison cell of St. Gilles, where Edith Cavell had been awaiting her fate for the past ten weeks, cut off entirely from friends and relations, but nobly unafraid, is one of the most moving documents of the war.

"To my astonishment and relief", he writes, "I found my friend perfectly calm and resigned. But this could not lessen the tenderness and intensity of feeling on either part during that last interview of almost an hour. Her first words to me were upon a matter concerning herself personally, but the solemn asseveration which accompanied them was made expressedly in the light of God and eternity. She then added that she wished all her friends to know that she willingly gave her life for her country, and said: 'I have no fear nor shrinking; I have seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me'. She further said: 'I thank God for this ten weeks' quiet before the end'. 'Life has always been hurried and full of difficulty.' 'This time of rest has been a great mercy.' 'They have all been very kind to me here. But this I would say, standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.'

"We partook of the Holy Communion together, and she received the Gospel message of consolation with all her heart. At the close of the little service I began to repeat the words 'Abide with me', and she joined softly in the end. We sat quietly talking until it was time for me to go. She gave me parting messages for relations and friends. She spoke of her soul's needs at the moment, and she received the assurance of God's Word as only the Christian can do. Then I said 'Good-bye', and she smiled and said, 'We shall meet again'.

"The German military chaplain was with her at the end, and afterwards gave her Christian burial. He told me: 'She was brave and bright to the last. She professed her Christian faith, and that she was glad

to die for her country'. 'She died like a heroine.'"

No need here to enquire into the truth of the horrible stories afterwards circulated relating to the manner in which this noble woman was done to death. All the accounts of the shooting can at present only be the evidence of hearsay. In any case such an act had, and could have, no parallel in Great Britain. Even in cases of proved espionage—and we have it on the authority of Sir Edward Grey, as well as of Secretary Gibson, that Edith Cavell was not charged with this offence—Great Britain had meted out to a woman no sentence of death since the war began. Not a few women of German birth had been found guilty and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for deliberate and persistent spying, but in each case the lawyers for the defence were accorded the same privileges as in a civil court in peace time, and the prisoner the opportunity of having the sentence reconsidered.

Edith Cavell died with words of forgiveness on her lips, but it was well that Germany should know that it could not continue such crimes with impunity. When asked in the House of Commons towards the end of October whether the Foreign Secretary intended to take steps to convey to Baron von Bissing that when opportunity offered he would be held personally responsible by His Majesty's Government for this quasi-judicial assassination, Lord Robert Cecil, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, referred to the Prime Minister's pledge on May 5, 1915, that due reparation would be exacted from all persons, whatever their position, who could be shown to have maltreated our prisoners in Germany. "The pledge", he added, "still held good, and applied with twofold force in the case of a savage murder, under legal form, of a noble woman"; though he did not think that any good purpose might be served in attempting to convey that resolution to any particular German official, who, for all they knew, might not be the chief offender.

The subsequent memorial service at St. Paul's Cathedral—the mother church of the diocese in which Edith Cavell had herself worked as a nurse—attended by Queen Alexandra, the Prime Minister, the representatives of the great Dominions, and a mighty concourse of mourners representing every phase and class of public and social life, but especially of the nursing profession, showed how deeply the nation had been stirred by this unforgettable crime, and was a profoundly impressive tribute to the memory of a woman who had given her life for her country as surely and as bravely as the noblest heroes on the field of battle.

F. A. M.

CHAPTER VIII

SALONIKA AND THE BALKAN CAMPAIGN

(November, 1915–January, 1916)

General Sarrail and the Archangel Mountain Position—French Position on the Cerna and Vardar—British Front from Rabrovo to Lake Doiran—General Teodoroff's Attempt to Prevent a Franco-British Junction—The Attack on the British Front at Doiran—Resistance of the Tenth Division—Successful Junction and Retirement of Franco-British Forces across Greek Frontier—Salonika from Political and Strategical Standpoints—Salonika and the Serbians—M. Venizelos and the Greek Attitude of Neutrality—General Sarrail and Greece—The Defences of Salonika—Sarrail's Destruction of Part of the Railway—Air Raids—Bulgaria's Forces—Reactions of German and Austrian Military Necessities—The Serbian Retreat through Montenegro—Montenegro's Position—Exoneration of the Italians from Responsibility—Montenegro's Diplomacy—Fall of Mt. Lovchen—Retirement of King Nicolas from the Capital Cettinje and the Country.

IN pushing up the Vardar valley to the point where the tributary Cerna joins the Vardar at an acute angle, General Sarrail with his comparatively small French force had gone as far as, or farther than, prudence would allow. The French force crossed the Cerna on November 5, 1915, driving in the Bulgarian outposts, but were then confronted by the mountainous Archangel position, strongly held by the Bulgarians. That barrier lay between them and the small Serbian force which, led by Colonel Vassitch, was hanging on by toes and finger nails to the Babuna Pass, 10 miles away on the other side of Mount Archangel. When Colonel Vassitch's hold was torn away by the weight of numbers, and to escape capture he had to fall back towards Monastir and eventually follow the main Serbian army on the only road to safety through Albania, General Sarrail's mission had failed, as it was bound to do, because it had started too late, and because, slow as was the German-Austrian advance southwards through winter Serbia, reinforcement for the French or British forces was slower still. Nothing, as explained in an earlier chapter, was left for General Sarrail to do but to go back, leaving the Serbians to their fate and Macedonia to the Bulgarians. Thanks to the slowness of his adversaries, he had not to make the decision in haste; and his military ability and the fighting material he commanded enabled him to retire from a delicate situation with little loss and great honour. How little his decision was hastened may be apprehended from the fact that till November 27 he retained all his positions, and when the Bulgarians, after manœuvring the Serbians from the Babuna Pass, turned their attention to the French, Sarrail beat them off in a fierce encounter which cost them 4000 killed and wounded.

Nevertheless, retreat was a necessity, however it might be delayed, and it was a disagreeable one, because of the large amount of war material and stores which had been collected in the angle between the Cerna and the Var-

dar for the advance that could never be pushed. Even when, by a series of small attacks intended to deceive the enemy into believing that the French had not abandoned the idea of an advance, Sarrail had covered the withdrawal of the larger part of his stores, the difficulties were not at an end; on the contrary, they were growing,

The British forces held a much more contracted front, from Rabrovo to Lake Doiran, with the Belashitza Mountains to their north-east. General Sarrail's problem was to withdraw his elongated line, especially where it formed the bulge of the horseshoe, till he could flatten it out into a straight line with the British troops on his

The Campaign in the Balkans: French troops entraining at Salonika

as the Bulgarians became numerically stronger and as the detachments of mixed Austrian, German, and Bulgarian troops began to come down from the north. The French were not holding a straight front, but were formed in a kind of horseshoe, of which one prong extended from the River Cerna to Krivolak, on the River Vardar, while the other prong went down the opposite bank of the Vardar till it touched the British troops, some miles east of the river at Rabrovo.

right flank. The Bulgarians were not blind to his intentions, and the commander of the Southern Bulgarian Army, General Teodoroff, who had already proved his capacity by the way in which he had frustrated the efforts of the Franco-British relieving-force with one hand while giving himself the opportunity of grasping at Colonel Vassitch's forlorn hope with the other, endeavoured to improve the situation to his own advantage. He had disposed considerable forces at

Istib and Strumnitza early in November, to prevent a further advance by either French or British up the left (easterly) bank of the Vardar; he now endeavoured to use these forces to prevent an effective junction between General Sarrail's right and the British left flank. He concentrated the bulk of his troops to right and left of the road which leads from Strumnitza through Rabrovo, south to Lake Doiran, and, marching astride this road, sought to drive a wedge between the French and British forces. If this could have been done, he would have then flung his whole weight on the British, driven them back across the Greek frontier, and would then have been able to turn westwards to cut the line of retreat of the French down the Vardar valley. The plan was a good one. It failed owing to the fine handling and the fine fighting qualities of the British Tenth Division.

The British Line in the Balkans: preparing the new battle-field

The Tenth Division was a New Army formation, and was made up entirely of Irish troops trained at the Curragh under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir B. Mahon, and blooded in the Suvla Bay operations. Among its units there were one of the battalions of the Connaught Rangers, a couple of battalions of the Munster Fusiliers, and two battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. On these fell the brunt of the fighting, and the gallantry with which they bore themselves was recognized in the War Office *communiqué* describing their successful resistance. On December 3 the French withdrew from Krivolak, and by December 5 had reached the steep defile where the Vardar runs through the crags of Demir Kapu. Their retreat was continuing methodi-

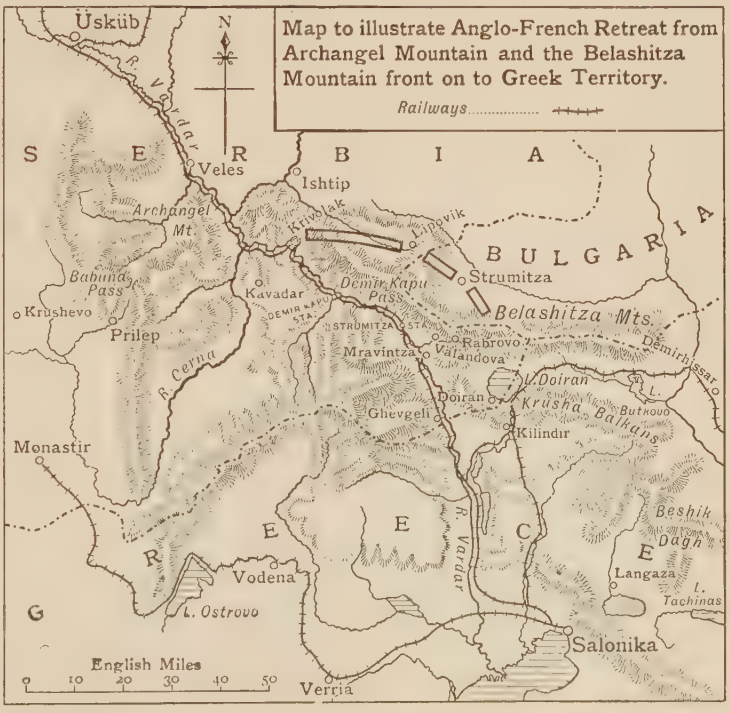
Awaiting the Bulgarian Onrush: a British outpost on the look-out for the enemy

cally the next day, when the Bulgarians made their first move by launching an attack prepared by a heavy bombardment on the British positions 20 miles to the east-south-east. The attack was pushed home with great determination, and in the mountain mists small parties of the Bulgarians reached our first-line trenches, only to be immediately driven out by a counter-attack. The onrush flickered away.

The Bulgarians re-formed, and next day began the attack with greater forces. They came on with a courageous disregard of losses and with a close imitation of the German phalanx formation. By weight of numbers—one account described the odds at the crucial section of the front as ten to one—they bore the Irishmen out of the first line of trenches, though not before the darkness of the short winter's day had fallen. Under cover of the darkness the vanguard of the Tenth Division withdrew to a second line of trenches, and naturally suffered in the retirement. But next day, when again the Bulgarians attacked, the Irish Brigade could not be moved. They held their ground as long as it was necessary for the purposes of the French commander, who at the end of this three days' battle had withdrawn his men far enough south to be out of any danger of suffering from General Teodoroff's strategy. It remained only to align the French and British troops, both falling back together, the British to their third position. The action had cost us 1500 men and eight guns, which had to be abandoned, but the French force was in safety, and the retreat of the combined armies could now proceed methodically and without risk. The Bulgarian losses, which were unofficially placed at 8000 men, were

certainly much higher than ours, because they had to take risks in order to secure the great prize which would have fallen to them had Teodoroff's *coup* come off. On December 11 the retreat of the French was continued, protected by their rear-guards, to the line Smokvitza - Doiran. Next day they reached Ghevgeli, and the British troops, falling back with equal regularity and steadiness, recrossed the Greek frontier. By Christmas the Franco-British forces, each with a line of railway at its disposal, were within reach of their base at Salonika.

Salonika in the winter of 1915–6 stood for many things to the Allies. It was during General Sarrail's fighting retreat a haven; and those who were ignorant of the French commander's ability and the forces at his disposal, or who were influenced by the loudly proclaimed intentions of the Germans and Bulgarians to hurl the British and French into the sea, hoped only that the Allies would be able to extricate themselves from a difficult position without loss. It is indeed possible that pusillanimity in high places fostered these fears. But the idea of abandoning the enterprise on which Sarrail had embarked never entered the heads of the French Higher Command for a moment, though in France, as in Britain, there were critics who condemned the diversion of any considerable force from the Western front to the auxiliary expedition in the Ægean. General Joffre, however, held positive views, and even the German attack on Verdun did not shake them, but, on the contrary, demonstrated their soundness. To him Salonika represented, not a haven, but a base for future operations which might find a joint in the defences of the Central Powers and their allies. That was one aspect of its military value, and was a preponderant one if ever the Bulgarian army was to be driven back from the country of the Serbians. There was another. Salonika was a combined naval and military base, which is to say it was a depot where forces could be assembled not merely to oppose the Bulgarian forces on their



front, but to threaten other vulnerable points in Asia Minor or in Turkey. With Salonika and Alexandria in their hands, the Allies, possessing as they did the command of marine communications, were in this part of the field of warfare on interior lines. They could transfer troops across from one point to another on the shores of the Mediterranean — for example, from

Map illustrating the Strategic Importance of Salonika

Salonika to the Gallipoli Peninsula, from Salonika to the Gulf of Alexandretta, or from Alexandria to Salonika—ten times more quickly than the enemy could transfer troops from any one of these points to another. Salonika and Alexandria are only four days' steaming apart; possible points of attack on the Turkish-Asiatic coast, Adalia and Alexandretta, are three or four days from Salonika, two or three days from Alexandria. The Turks would need as many weeks to reinforce their defences from Constantinople. Salonika as a haven was of value; as a jumping-off place it was invaluable.

It was from this aspect that it had to be considered; but there were other considerations of a political and strategic kind that could not be neglected. The use of Salonika for purposes of military convenience by any belligerent Powers was a clear breach of neutrality, which Germany was not slow to point out, and of which Greece was uncomfortably aware. The justification offered by the Allies was that the occupation of Salonika and of the railways and other communications leading from it to Macedonia was the necessary consequence of their endeavour to offer that help to Serbia which Greece had refused, and which she had been expected by treaty to give. We say "expected", because Greece denied that she had been bound to give assistance to her ally, and Prince George of Greece, in a letter addressed to Lord Burnham, and published in the *Daily Telegraph*, declared that "neither the spirit nor the letter of the Greco-Serbian Treaty obliged Greece to intervene, while from a practical point of view it was obvious that such intervention would have brought about a disaster for Greece, while being of no material benefit to Serbia". But one clause of that treaty permitted to Serbia the use of communications with Serbia for re-munitionment or reinforcement. It was on this clause that the Allies relied. Earlier in the war Serbia had been re-munitioned in this way, a fact to which Greece pointed in evidence of her sympathy and good faith. But the distance between re-munitionment and reinforcement when the reinforce-

ment was effected by the troops, not of Serbia, but of other nations whose status certainly had no place in the Greco-Serbian Treaty, was a great deal in the letter, however little in the spirit; and Greece found herself in a humiliating and even in a dangerous position. She could not turn the

Salonika during the Allies' Occupation: view along the quay, with a captured German aeroplane in the foreground

Entente forces out, even if public feeling in Greece had supported the step; but while they remained she was exposed to charges from Germany and Austria of violating neutrality by sheltering them. Logically she could not deny the right of Germany and Austria to invade her territory in order to throw the intruders into the sea, as they had threatened to do; but here again the prospect of welcoming the Bulgarians over the border was one that no Greek could regard with pleasure and few would tolerate. Moreover, as M. Venizelos pointed out in an article criticizing the attitude of King Constantine, it was certain that once the Bulgarians got into Greece they would never be got out again—at any rate by the Greeks. He might have added, though he did not, since the fact was so well known, that once Austria set foot in Salonika that useful port would be for ever lost to Greece.

All that was left to Greece to do was to protest—which she did on every suitable occasion, and on some that were unsuitable—and, at first, to endeavour to demonstrate to the French and British that they were unwelcome guests. These efforts were not entirely successful either from a diplomatic or

The French Command in the Balkans: General Sarrail and General Bailloud at Salonika

from a practical point of view. On the point of diplomacy the Allies replied to the protests by pointing to Greek obligations to Serbia, and ultimately, when the question arose of transporting Serbian soldiers to the Salonika front, referred the Greek Government to the Serbian Government for explanations. From a practical point of view the policy of pin-pricks in which the Greeks were at first inclined to indulge had several drawbacks. If the Greeks persisted in regarding General Sarrail and the British as cuckoos in the Salonika nest they found that the birds were rather pugnacious. There was a disposition to deny the French troops the free use of railways; General Sarrail retorted by blowing up a line of railway which hampered his strategical dispositions. Salonika was a nest of spies; Sarrail arrested 360 of them, and deported the Bulgarian, Austrian, and other enemy legations. Rightly or wrongly the Greek islands were suspected of giving harbourage to German and Austrian submarines—it is only fair to say that Prince George of Greece denounced the suspicion as ridiculous, and pointed out that the coast of Africa and the Bulgarian coast near Enos afforded the submarines sufficient shelter —but the Allied Fleets were able to blockade the whole of Greek shipping. It is not necessary to waste much sympathy on Greece at this period of her history, but commercially and politically she stood to gain nothing and lost a good deal by the position in which she was placed, or by the attitude she felt herself forced to adopt.

Salonika was, from its geographical position, of great value to the Allies, though not nearly of as great value as

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY RUSSELL

Sir Douglas Haig, K.C.B.

Commanding the British Army in France

its possession would have been to the enemy. The gulf is horseshoe shaped Ω, and therefore, though difficult to approach or to attack by sea, requires large forces to defend it on the land side, because these forces have to be spread out over lines covering the whole perimeter of the horseshoe and at some distance from it. With sufficiently numerous forces and with heavy guns its defences can be made very hard to approach. General Sarrail, with General Mahon, converted its environs into a vast entrenched camp. On the west of Salonika, at a distance of 12 miles, flows the River Vardar, Sarrail's line of retreat from Macedonia. It is unfordable at all times of the year, with marshy banks extending widely on either side of the stream and making the river a formidable obstacle to any attack from the west. Eight miles north of the town rises the ridge of hills of which the highest and the middle point is Daud Baba. From this 1500-feet hill spurs run to the River Vardar on the west and towards Salonika on the south.

It has been called the Achi Baba of Salonika, and was converted into a dominating citadel which covered the railway approaches from the north and the railway and road bridges over the Vardar. East of the Daud Baba position the ridges turn south-east to the Derbend heights. Through a gap here passes the road to Seres, and south of it the hills rise again and cover Salonika in a wide arc which curves round westward as it nears the gulf. The average height of this range which protects the town on the east is about 1700 feet, but hills such as Beas Tash (2193 feet) and Hortiach (3543 feet) are higher. From the mouth of the Vardar round the outer circle of defences resting on the positions named is something over 70 miles, a perimeter requiring close on a quarter of a million men for its defence.

But with such forces at the disposal of the commander defending it the Salonika position was a very hard nut for the Bulgarians to crack, even with the aid of such men as the Austrians, Turks, and Germans could spare to assist them. On the west the combination of river and marsh offered difficulties similar to those which Hindenburg found in his attacks on Riga. On the north there was Daud Baba, which under General Sarrail's skilled direction became the equivalent of a modern fortress, and offered the Bulgarians the gloomy prospect of a Verdun if they should endeavour to storm it. On the east the defensive positions could be approached only by a 20-mile gap between the two lakes of Butkovo and Tachinos. A length of the River Struma ran the whole length of the gap from lake to lake, and was itself a strong defensible position. West of this gap were the forward slopes of the Krusha ridge on the north of the Seres road, and of the Beshik Dagh to the south of it. Artillery on these heights commanded the river. The river, the lakes, the hills made the Struma position a strong one, and with sufficient men a commander could easily close an approach to Salonika on this side. The weakness by which the attacking commander would be

hampered would be that of finding heights by which he could either dominate the defence or regulate his own artillery-fire. Between the four lakes, Doiran, Langaza, Tachinos, and Butkovo, the country had no roads. The railway to Dedeagatch from Salonika, which it was necessary that the Allies should keep under their control, takes a wide curve to the northward, away from the coast.

During the remainder of the winter and well into the spring of 1916 General Sarrail continued to strengthen these his Grecian lines of Torres Vedras, taking what military steps seemed necessary to him, and leaving the diplomatists to settle the bill with the Greek Government. The position of ambiguity into which Greece had been forced made these diplomatic conferences frequent. They occurred when new railway facilities were demanded, or when Sarrail, for strategic reasons, destroyed a length of the railway and the bridges at Demir Hissar and Kilindir (January 12), and they recurred when raids were made on Salonika by enemy aeroplanes with the intention of damaging the Allied forces, but with the result of destroying Greek property. A strong squadron of French aeroplanes sallied from Salonika from time to time to drop bombs on Monastir and to discover the dispositions of the Bulgarian forces, and a flight was made on one or more occasions as far as the Bulgarian capital of Sofia, where, besides the regulation bomb, the aviator dropped leaflets to inform any Bulgarian inhabitants who were ignorant of the fall of Erzerum and Trebizond that such events cast their shadows before them. The Bulgarian or German aeroplanes which visited Salonika with intention of returning such messages in kind were not very successful, for the struggle which the Germans maintained for the ascendancy of the air on the Western front monopolized

Highlanders in the Balkans: a winter snap-shot in one of the British bivouacs

their best machines and aviators, and a Zeppelin, which report said had been a present from the Kaiser to Ferdinand of Bulgaria, was ignominiously brought down in the marshes of the Vardar, west of Salonika. These aerial exchanges and a continued activity of patrol-work in the hills towards Doiran and the paths to Ghevgeli comprised the manifest operations during the early months of

1916; though throughout the period the arrangement and preparation of troops and the accumulation of supplies continued unostentatiously.

It may be said that by the end of January the chances of success by the Bulgarians at Salonika had faded. They had pushed forward work on the railway, and had completed the length from Nish to Ghevgeli by mid-January, so as to secure supplies and ammunition, but they had not enough men for an attack. They had suffered heavily at the hands of the Serbians; part of their forces had been detached for pursuit of the Serbians in northern Albania, where Essad Pasha's levies gave a great deal of trouble, and until Roumania's attitude was defined the Bulgarian - Roumanian frontier could not be neglected. They may have had eight divisions left for attacking General Sarrail, but that was not enough without help from other quarters. Germany had not much to lend. They had possibly five divisions in Serbia, most of them diverted to garrison duty, for the task of holding down Serbia was at least as hard as holding down Belgium, and was performed with no less tyranny. Germany had also many calls on her for the operations she was projecting about Verdun. Austria was preoccupied with subduing the Montenegrins, in overrunning Albania, in arranging to meet the Russian winter and early spring attacks in Bessarabia and about Czernowitz. Austria like Germany was further considering an attack on the western group of the Allies. She was fiercely attacked by the Italians on the Isonzo front as soon as the Germans developed their offensive at Verdun, and replied to this menace with a violent counter-thrust on the Italian hard-won Trentino positions. The Turks, after the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula by the Allies, had concentrated a force about Xanthi on the Greco-Bulgarian frontier, apparently with a view to advancing on Salonika; but the series of defeats which began on January 8 as the Russian Army of the Caucasus advanced into Armenia obliged them to turn their attention elsewhere. Thus the force available for an attack on Salonika amounted to about 130,000 men, which was insufficient for the purpose. The Central Powers had to rest on the defensive therefore at this point and do the best they could to prosecute the campaign elsewhere while holding back the combined French, British, and Serbian forces from any attempt to reconquer Serbia.

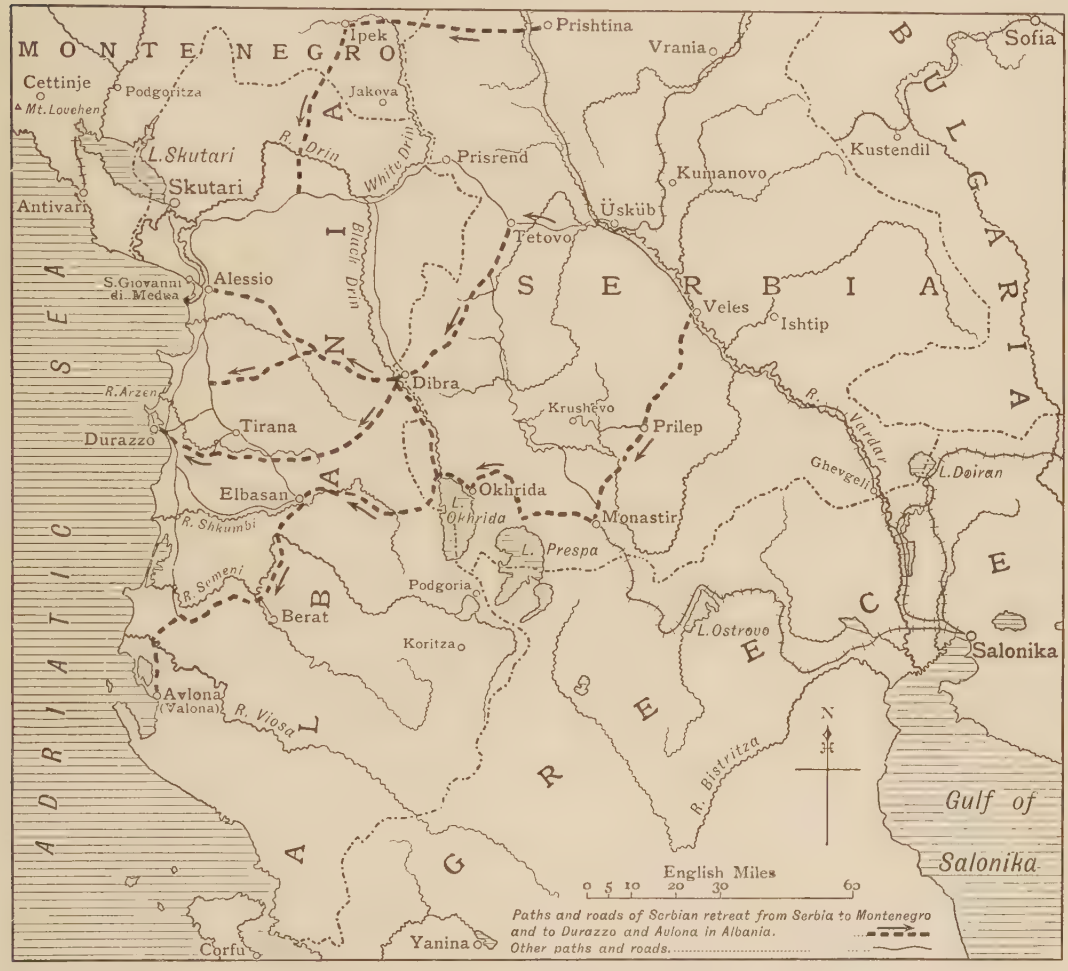
The most effective step they took in support of this policy was that of overrunning Albania and Montenegro, whereby any prospect that the Italians could operate against their flank from this direction was removed. The retreat of the Serbians through Albania could not be harassed by the pursuing forces to an extent overwhelmingly disastrous to the pursued, because the difficulties were alike for all who traversed the snow-clad mountains of Albania during the winter. But cold, and hardship, and hunger which approached starvation took a heavy toll of the fugitives, as well as of those civilians who accompanied them and of the Austrian and Bulgarian pri-

soners whom they took with them. The passage of the Serbian army through Albania was one of the tragedies of the war.

The almost inevitable corollary of Serbia's removal from effective action was the reduction of Montenegro. Montenegro had been one of the neglected, if not one of the negligible, factors of the war, till the end of 1915. She was a poor country, not very well armed, badly provisioned, and without any such reserves of ammunition as were necessary for a prolonged war. It cannot be determined here, and will not be determined till long after the war is ended, what responsibility rested on Montenegro's declared allies for leaving her isolated for so long. It is certain, on the one hand, that a great deal of suffering was endured by the population, which was involuntarily reinforced by numbers of Bosnian refugees, and that the Austrians prosecuted a rigorous blockade of the coast, including the port of Antivari, and raided Cettinje and the palace of King Nicolas by aeroplane. The impression left on the mind of the uninformed and unprejudiced spectator was that Montenegro, being unable to take a vigorous part in the war, was neglected by her friends as well as by her enemies. Queen Elena of Italy is a princess of Montenegro, and Italy, especially, was reproached, and very unjustly reproached, for not coming to the rescue of her small beleaguered neighbour. But unless Italy had been in a position to send a very large army to Montenegro, and to employ a considerable portion of her fleet in guarding bases on both sides of the Adriatic, the expeditionary force would not have been of any use in protecting Montenegro from invasion at the time when Austria was prepared to undertake it. The whole expeditionary force would have had to be expert at mountain warfare, bringing with it mountain guns and plenty of engineers, miners, and sappers. With only one small railway (from Antivari to Vir Bazar) and not a great number of carriage roads, a vast amount of hill transport would have been necessary. No doubt there would have been great political advantages in preserving Montenegro intact; but, so far as Italy was concerned, the Italian army had other and more indispensable strategical work to do. General Cadorna declined to be led into what is called by the expert an ancillary expedition, and by the public a side-show, and she was at least as well justified of her decision as either France or Britain. In short, Montenegro was a sufferer from the "leave it to partner" policy which continually vitiated the Allied operations during the first eighteen months of the war, but still more a sufferer from the fact that till the spring of 1916 the preponderance of military effectiveness rested with Germany and Austria. They could attack Montenegro with much less difficulty than the allies of Montenegro could defend her, and while on the political side the subjugation of this small country could be exaggerated to a point of the highest impressiveness, on the strategical side it rounded off the conquest of Serbia, the overrunning of Albania, the extension of the Austrian coast-line on the Adriatic, and some consequent increase

of Austria's ability to place obstacles in the way of Italian co-operation in the restoration of Serbia.

The political aspect of the failure on the part of either Great Britain, not so single-minded, and it was urged with some show of reasonableness that King Nicolas, whose chief endeavour had been always to preserve Montenegro from destruction, had been made



Map showing the Lines of the Serbian Retreat to the Adriatic

France, or Italy to intervene on Montenegro's behalf may be left with the further observation that Montenegro's attitude was not without ambiguity. The Montenegrin people were at one with the Serbians and the cause which Serbia represented, but the Court was use of in order to adopt an attitude of acquiescence with Austrian designs.

Before analysing this suggestion an account may be given of the extremely rapid campaign against Montenegro, which began with the capture of Mount Lovchen on January 10. Mount Lov-

chen dominates the bay and harbour of Cattaro from the Montenegrin side, but from a military standpoint this is not a complete statement. If Mount Lovchen had been an overpowering menace to this great Austrian natural harbour the Austrians would hardly have spent millions in fortifying and developing the indentations of the bay, the Bocche di Cattaro. But jutting out into the bay is Mount Vermats, which is the real dominating height, and this had already been strongly fortified by the Austrians against a possible attack from Mount Lovchen. If Mount Lovchen had been furnished with Austrian guns, and had been converted into a Gibraltar, it would have compromised the defences of Mount Vermats. Without such armament, and in fact possessing merely some old guns of doubtful value, Mount Lovchen was of little use to the Montenegrins and of little harm to the Austrians. Its capture was of value only because of its impressiveness, and it does not appear to have cost the Austrians much effort. According to Austrian accounts, the whole campaign against Montenegro was undertaken by Austro-Hungarian forces, and the advance began on three sides at once. The principal attack was from the Bocche di Cattaro on Mount Lovchen, because Cettinje was only a short distance away, and a blow struck there would reach the heart of the country. The Montenegrins, who had always regarded Mount Lovchen as invulnerable, would, it was expected, regard this as the feint attack, and would give their chief attention to other preparations being made by the Austrians at

Scutari, to which the Serbians eventually retreated through Northern Albania

Avtovatz, Vilek, Cajnitza, and along the Tara River, and especially around Berane.

The Austrians were extremely active about Berane, which they occupied after a struggle, and it seems justifiable to assume that the Montenegrins neglected to entrench themselves strongly or in considerable numbers on the Mount Lovchen positions. Meanwhile the Austrian Fleet in the Bay of Cattaro, which had enjoyed the opportunity for many months of ascertaining the correct ranges of forts on the mountain, waited until a clear day before attempting co-operation with the Austrian military forces. The day arrived on January 8, 1916, and the task of the soldiers proved a much easier one than had been anticipated. On the afternoon of the 8th a violent snowstorm handicapped the bombardment by the fleet, and the attack was suspended, for it was feared that the infantry would lose their way on the unknown terrain and would fall into ambushes prepared by Montenegrin mountaineers who knew every foot of it. But on the 9th the weather cleared, the guns of the fleet got to work, and were supported by Austrian land batteries, and the attackers encountered so little resistance that, according to an Austrian officer, they called it a tourist excursion. On the 10th of January the mountain was occupied; there was absolutely no hand-to-hand fighting; and the kindliest critic must acknowledge that the feat could only have been accomplished in face of the feeblest resistance by the defenders. The naval guns counted for something, but naval guns of greater calibre and numbers did not avail in Gallipoli. Mount Lovchen, which was expected to stand for months and exact a toll of men numbered by the ten thousand, fell without any resistance worthy of the name. The Austrian casualties were fifty-four killed and wounded!

The Defences of Scutari: the citadel, overlooking the lake

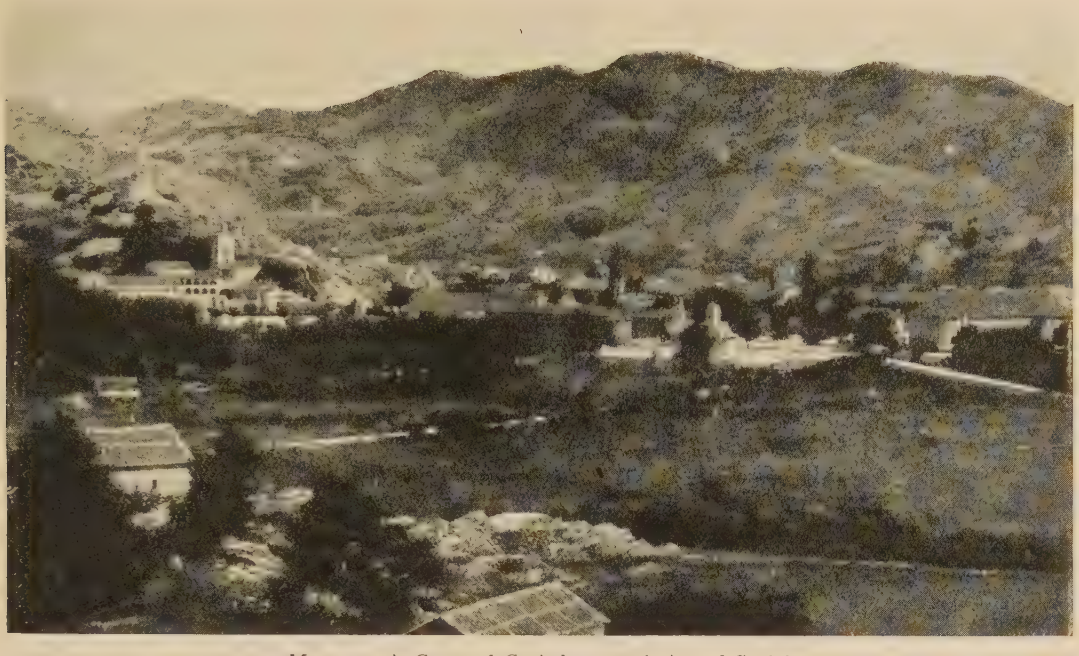
With Mount Lovchen in Austrian hands the road to Cettinje was open.

The capital fell without any fighting at all; the Austrians occupied Montenegro, as one might say, before breakfast. The proceedings which followed justify the term of ambiguity which has been applied to them. After the fall of Mount Lovchen on January 10 King Nicolas asked the Austrian commander for a truce, but was refused. News of the refusal was received at Cettinje that night, and the King and the civil authorities left for Podgoritza, with the exception of the Mayor and a Court official, who remained behind to hand over the town to the Austrians. The Austrians, apparently ignorant of the ease of their conquest, did not arrive till three days later, when a troop of about twenty men with a lieutenant rode in, and were followed by others later in the day. At about the same time emissaries from King Nicolas returned.

These emissaries, according to the accounts first circulated, were the bearers of a personal letter from King Nicolas to the Austrian Emperor, which, after referring to the fall of the capital, asked for peace and a guarantee of the liberties of the Montenegrin people. Next day, or the day after, the Austrian General of Division replied insisting on unconditional capitulation and disarmament. Apparently these terms were accepted on January 16, though they were afterwards modified to the point of allowing the Montenegrins to keep their own personal weapons, though not army equipment.

But now a not unexpected difficulty arose. The negotiations, if not merely

The Austrian Advance into Montenegro: the road from Mount Lovchen into King Nicolas's kingdom



Montenegro's Captured Capital: general view of Cettinje

a ruse to gain time, as was suggested in their defence, were not to the taste of the Montenegrin people; they were abhorrent to many Montenegrin officers. Some of them declared their intention of fighting on, and King Nicolas, whatever his original motives may have been, now withdrew from the negotiations, and, as far as he could do so, rescinded the capitulation. But in effect if not in name Montenegro disappeared from the ranks of the fighting nations, impelled by a necessity not less urgent than that which had afflicted Serbia, but which gave her a great deal less the aspect of having heroically resisted it. Many of her soldiers never laid down their arms, but retired to join the Serbians making their way to Durazzo and Avlona (or Valona), which were the goals of the Serbian retreat. The Italian navy and other forces, with an efficiency and a gallantry beyond praise, held the way of retreat from Albania open; and by so doing preserved a very large number of some of the best fighting-men in Europe, Serbians and Montenegrins, for warfare in another theatre and on more fortunate occasions.

E. S. G.

CHAPTER IX

WITH THE CANADIANS ON THE WESTERN FRONT

(October, 1915–January, 1916)

Canada's Roll of Honour—The Reputation of Princess Patricia's Own—Second Division at the Front—Winning their Spurs—"Cutting-out Expeditions"—Lieutenant-Colonel Odlum's Model—Some of the Early Raids—Keeping the Enemy Busy—A Chapter of Heroism—Christmas and the New Year on the Canadian Front—Daring Work of Patrols and Snipers—How Lieutenant Owen died—Grim Work in the German Trenches—Some Illustrious Visitors—Canada's Response to the King's Appeal for More Men—The Dominion's Share in the War.

AFTER saving the situation in the first great gas attack at Ypres on April 22–23, 1915, and bearing the brunt of some of the hardest fighting in the Festubert region during the following May and June,[1] the Canadians remained in the forefront of the fight on the Western front, though not again called upon to engage in any major operation before the end of that year. The glory of the First Division, which had resounded throughout the Empire, had been dearly won. By September 30, 1915, little more than seven months after arriving at the front, its total casualties in killed, wounded, and missing amounted to 11,705, equal to nearly 50 per cent of the whole contingent. These, of course, were considerably added to in the deadly warfare of the trenches during the ensuing months. The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, who preceded the First Division to France, arriving at the British front before the end of 1914, had lost up to June 30 of the following year no fewer than 981 officers and men, including 253 killed and 631 wounded. This heroic regiment was afterwards transferred to the Third Canadian Division, formed under the command of General Mercer towards the end of 1915 from troops already in France or at the training depots at Shorncliffe and Bramshott. On its departure from the 80th British Brigade, to which it had previously been attached, the General Officer commanding that Brigade placed on record his "keen appreciation of the splendid services" rendered by the battalion.

"The gallantry of the P.P.C.L.I. during the fighting at St. Eloi," he wrote, "and later during the second battle of Ypres, when the battalion hung on to their trenches with unparalleled tenacity and lost over 75 per cent of their effectives, has won for them not only the admiration of their comrades, but, when the history of the war is written, will earn for the regiment a reputation which will stand amongst the highest in the record of the exploits of the British Army."

The Second Canadian Contingent arrived at Shorncliffe a few weeks after the departure of the First Contingent for the front, and were inspected by the King on September 2, 1915, before their departure for France. Here Lieutenant-General E. A. H.

[1] Vol. III, Chapters XI and XII.

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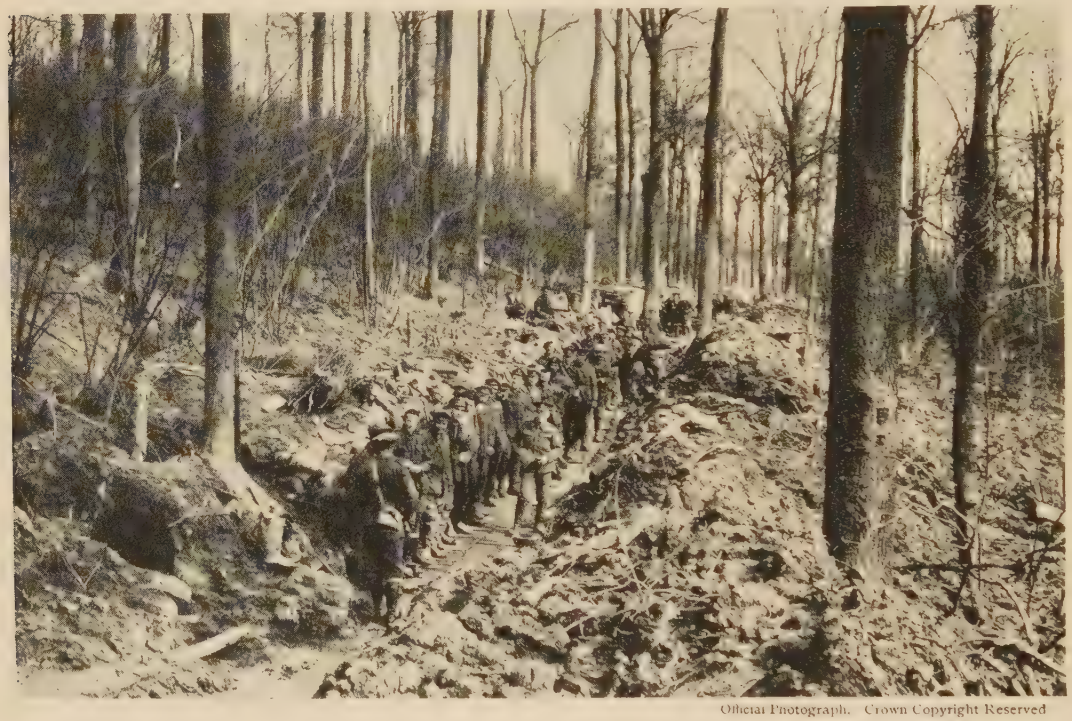
King George and Canada's Second Canadian Division: the troops marching past His Majesty at the saluting point

Alderson, C.B., who had greatly distinguished himself in his leadership of the First Canadian Division, now assumed command of the Canadian Army Corps, the 1st Division being placed under Major-General A. W. Currie, C.B., and the 2nd Division under Major-General R. E. W. Turner, V.C., C.B. The new Contingent won the warm approval of Lord French—Sir John French as he was at the time. "The material of which it is composed is excellent," he wrote in his dispatch of October 15, 1915, "and this Division will, I am convinced, acquit itself well in face of the enemy, as the 1st Canadian Division has always done." Sir John was not mistaken. Though not put to the test of a decisive battle before the end of his command in France, the new-comers lived up to this high reputation in their cool courage in the firing line, and their dash and determination in the minor engagements in which they won their spurs. Many of them laid down their lives in these minor operations, thus helping to bind Canada and the British Empire together, in the words of the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, "with those indissoluble bonds which are forged on the field of battle".

The Canadians developed an audacious system of "cutting out" expeditions about this period, which relieved the monotony of the trench warfare through the winter, and helped to keep alive the offensive spirit of the Allies. Their night raid of November 16–17 was not the first foray of the kind on the Western front, but the plan of attack on that occasion—made and also personally superintended by Lieutenant-Colonel Victor W. Odlum, of the British Columbia Regiment—was so strikingly successful that it was described in French Army Orders and circulated to serve as a model. The attack was planned against two points in the enemy's front line near Messines, and for several days previously selected parties

of Colonel Odlum's and another battalion underwent special training for the task. In his account of the raid Sir W. Max Aitken, M.P., describes how, on the afternoon of the 16th, the Canadian Artillery cut the German wire opposite the points of attack, also destroying it in other

gallantry and resource not only during the cutting of the German wire, but also in superintending the laying of a bridge over the River Douve, not more than 16 yards from a heavily-manned German trench. It was a bright moonlight night, and it speaks volumes for the scoutcraft and cool-



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Canadian Infantry in a Wood at the Front

places in order to put the enemy off the scent. Trees interfered somewhat with the wire-cutting operations in front of the Canadians, so some scouts were sent forward after dark to complete the work. These were under the command of Lieutenant William D. Holmes, who had distinguished himself by gallant conduct at Festubert in the previous May, and won the D.S.O. on the present occasion for his

ness of these Canadians that they completed their task, after four hours' work, without attracting attention. All the volunteers of this daring party under Lieutenant Holmes—Sergeants H. Ashby and W. C. Meyerstein, Corporals Babcock, H. Odlum, and K. Weir, and Private J. Berry—were subsequently rewarded with the D.C.M.

Guided by these intrepid scouts at

2.30 on the following morning, the Canadians' storming-party, consisting of Brigade bombers under Captain C. T. Costigan and riflemen under Lieutenants A. Wrightson and J. R. M'Illree, reached the parapet of the 11th Prussians by the Petite Douve Farm unobserved. The weather had changed, a heavy rainstorm blowing as Captain Costigan and Lieutenant M'Illree led their bombing parties into the enemy's trench, Lieutenant M'Illree throwing down the first German he met and felling the second with his rifle. Joined by his bombing party he then led them along the trench and communicating trenches, all heavily manned by the enemy. Captain Costigan had meantime led his bombers in another direction, shooting with his revolver the first three Germans he met. Many of the enemy were bombed or bayoneted in this wild night's adventure, and twelve prisoners were taken. Touch was maintained throughout by telephone with Lieutenant-Colonel Odlum in the Canadian front-line trench, and as soon as the raiders had discovered all they were sent to find out they were recalled by prearranged signals, returning with their prisoners with the loss of one man accidentally killed and one wounded. Lieutenant Wrightson, who displayed the utmost coolness and judgment throughout, and received the Military Cross, was the last man to leave the trench after giving the order to retire. Captain Costigan and Lieutenant M'Illree were rewarded with the D.S.O., and Sergeant A. Robertson and Corporal A. K. Curry the D.C.M.

The other battalion's party, under Lieutenants J. E. Purslow and K. T. Campbell, had been less fortunate, a deep ditch 12 feet wide checking the advance right in front of the enemy's parapet. The ditch, which was shoulder high with water, was entered by both officers, but the bottom was found entangled with barbed wire, and all efforts to overcome this obstacle proved fruitless. The Canadians at this point, therefore, had to content themselves with bombing from positions close to the ditch, returning safely to their trenches after causing casualties among the enemy. Throughout the operation the Canadian artillery kept the enemy in the adjoining trenches at a respectful distance, and as soon as the party returned played havoc among the German reinforcements sent post-haste from all directions. The enemy was obviously nettled at this surprising *coup*, and in his official "wireless" accorded it the dignity of an attack in force, which had been repulsed. So far was this from being the truth that the British Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief sent a special message congratulating the Canadians on the success of the enterprise, Lieutenant-Colonel Odlum also receiving the D.S.O.

To the cunning of the backwoodsman was added the craft of the Indian frontiersman, one of the officers of the Gurkha Rifles, Captain Andrew H. Jukes, being attached to the staff of a Canadian infantry brigade to assist in the training of its scouts. His skill and initiative were responsible for much of their excellent work—including a number of enterprises against the enemy's trenches, which were

crowned with marked success—and were rewarded with the D.S.O.

It was no joke to be stationed opposite to these resourceful, devil-may-care Canadians, as the Prussians found to their cost. Shortly after the raid on the Petite Douve Farm, one of the Canadian patrols at night discovered an unexploded 4.5 shell between the front trenches. The shell was placed under the enemy's parapet and detonated with gun-cotton, causing no little damage in the process. The Canadian artillery also bore witness to the gradual growth of the dominant spirit in the British trenches. Sometimes the wire would be cut by the artillery in order to produce the impression of an impending attack and keep the enemy in a state of needless tension. On one such occasion described by Sir Max Aitken the bombardment so demoralized the Germans that some of them bolted from their trenches, only to be caught in the open by our shrapnel and machine-gun fire. "In one place," he adds, "apparently under the belief that an assault had taken place, the German artillery opened fire on their own front-line trenches and practically destroyed one of their own strong positions. A considerable portion of the enemy's front-line trenches was evacuated during the bombardment, and only reoccupied after dusk with great precaution."

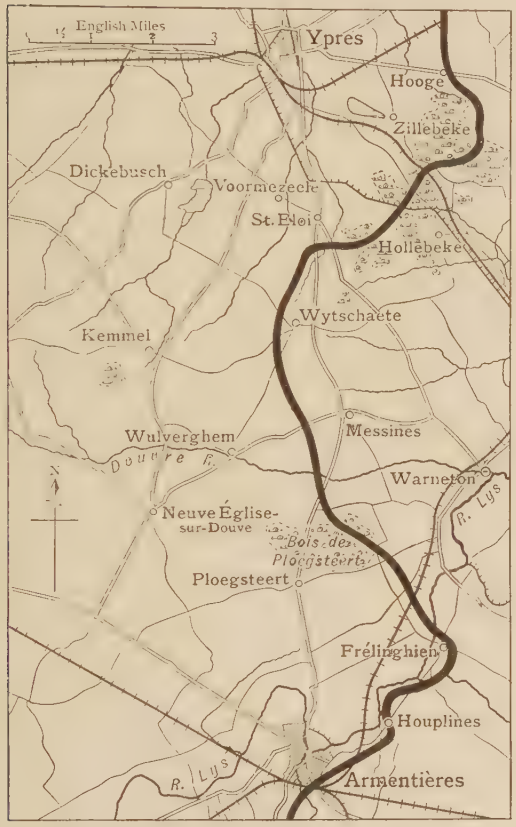
Other typical examples of Canadian grit and initiative may be mentioned here, though they rightly belong to the previous month's record. While the Germans were delivering their great counter-attack at Loos on the 8th of October, the enemy facing a Canadian battalion near Wytschaete exploded a number of mines, and advanced with the object of occupying the craters. Lieutenant A. W Northover was buried under the debris in the Canadian trench, but immediately on being dug out assumed control, and took steps to deny to the advancing enemy any foothold in the craters. "His prompt action and gallant example", says the *Gazette* in announcing his award of the Military Cross, "went a long way towards successfully coping with a difficult and dangerous situation." The D.C.M. was won on this occasion by Private H. B. Compton, of the same battalion, who, on being dug out from the wreckage with his officer, immediately volunteered to assist in bombing the enemy back, afterwards helping to recover four other men under heavy fire who had been buried by the explosion. "Throughout the action his courage, resource, and devotion to duty were most marked."

Five days later came the blooding of a new infantry battalion in an attack on the German crater in front of their lines, when both sides lost heavily, though the enemy's casualties were estimated as four times those of the Canadians.

"It was their first real baptism of fire," wrote Lieutenant H. W. Ferguson in a letter home quoted in *Canada*, "though we had been in it a little before, and the men, every one, stood up to it like old veterans. It would have done your heart good to have seen those men under shell-fire that at times seemed almost as though nothing human could exist under such a hail of hurling metal. . . . Many heroic deeds were done that day. All the wounded

were brought in by our fellows, only the dead remaining outside our parapets. These were brought in as well under cover of darkness that night. The spirit of the men is wonderful through it all."

Sergeant W. C. Ryer, of this battalion, here won his D.C.M. by



Map showing approximately the British Line between Ypres and Armentières, and the Scene of the Canadian Fighting during the winter of 1915–16

carrying another sergeant, who was mortally wounded, until his comrade died, and then returning to the crater and, with the assistance of another Canadian, carrying back a second. It was a fine example of heroism, performed under a heavy cross-fire from machine-guns and rifles. Similar devotion and bravery were displayed just a week later by Company Sergeant-Majors J. D. Matheson and B. Benton, and Private J. Donaghue, all of another Canadian battalion, at Wulverghem, near Messines. Matheson had been out with a patrol when two of his men were wounded, and as these could not be located owing to the enemy's heavy fire he led the remainder of his party back to their lines, afterwards crawling out alone along the enemy's wire searching for his missing comrades. Apparently this gallant attempt failed, but it fully earned the D.C.M. subsequently awarded for it. Benton and Donaghue were similarly decorated for volunteering to make a second and, as it proved, more successful attempt. They crawled out some three hundred yards, found one of the wounded men in a shell-hole near the German wire, and, after his wounds had been dressed by Company Sergeant-Major Benton, Donaghue crawled in with him on his back, guided by the sergeant-major. They, too, received the D.C.M., also richly deserved before the end of the month in the same district by Private G. L. Eastman, of another Canadian battalion, as officially recorded in the *London Gazette* as follows:—

"When on sentry duty in the front-line trenches he saw a German bomb coming into the trench. It would have fallen into a dug-out in which were two of his comrades, but he dashed forward, caught the bomb, and hurled it over the parapet, when it immediately exploded. Private Eastman's cool daring and presence of mind probably saved the lives of his two comrades."

Such deeds were common to all parts of the British front, but they deserve to be remembered as well as the more sanguinary records of the night forays with which this chapter of Canadian courage is largely concerned. Here is another typical instance of the dare-devil spirit which animated these Dominion troops, whether in the work of rescuing their own men or killing the Germans. It belongs to the story of their minor operations in October, 1915. Lieutenant J. G. Anderson and Private A. H. V. Whyte, both of the same battalion, went out to explore a German sap near Messines, the officer entering the sap itself and the private creeping along the edge. They met and shot two Germans, exchanged shots with three others, and returned with the rifles of the men they had killed. "Next day", says the *Gazette* in recording the award of the Military Cross to Lieutenant Anderson and the Distinguished Conduct Medal to Private Whyte, "they returned to the sap and attacked another body of Germans, who retired, leaving a cloak, some bombs, a periscope, &c., behind". These they brought in, together with much valuable information. About a week later Private Whyte ventured for a third time into the same sap, accompanied by two others, and, though heavily bombed by the Germans, did not return until further useful information had been secured.

It was this Canadian battalion which had been checked by the enemy in the "cutting out" expedition on November 16–17, and now distinguished itself in the attack on the advanced German barricade on the Messines Road in the early hours of December 15. A week or two previously our artillery fire had felled a large tree between the opposing lines, and this had fallen across the road about 100 yards from the Canadian lines. Quick to take advantage of this, the enemy had reached it by saps, and gradually converted it into a dangerous barricade. One night Lieutenant John Galt, of Strathcona's Horse —son of the President of the Union Bank of Canada, and great-grandson of John Galt, the Scottish novelist— had crawled out with fourteen men to take it by assault and blow it up, but the Germans in possession were ready with bombs and bullets, and the attack, though most gallantly delivered, failed, Lieutenant Galt and two others being afterwards reported missing, and eight of the survivors returning wounded. The battalion referred to prepared for their assault on the 15th of December with preliminary scouting and reconnoitring, which served them in good stead at the critical moment. The barricades were also shelled on several occasions, especially in the early morning of the 15th, when a number of direct hits were recorded. Two assaulting parties, one under Lieutenant K. T. Campbell, and the other under Lieutenant K. A. Mahaffy, then advanced towards the barricade, supported by a third party under Lieutenant E. H. Latter, the whole under the command of Captain E. C. Jackson. Against this concerted attack the German garrison had no chance, and the barricade was soon in the Canadians' hands, the survivors being

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Ready to Repel an Attack: Canadian infantry in the trenches wearing the new steel helmets

sent back to the British lines. A heavy machine-gun and artillery fire was opened by the enemy on the captured position, but the Canadians returned safely to their lines at daybreak, their only casualties being Lieutenant Campbell and one man, both slightly wounded. Captain Jackson, who commanded the attack with great dash and determination, received the D.S.O. for this exploit; and Lieutenant Campbell, who had also distinguished himself in the "cutting out" expedition of November 16–17, the Military Cross. The D.C.M. was won on the same occasion by Sergeant J. S. M'Glashan, who accounted for five Germans as they were making for cover; and by Privates J. H. Lindsay and R. A. Coles, for conspicuous gallantry during the attack.

Winter had now settled down in earnest in Flanders. The rains transformed the roads into quagmires, and much of the low-lying ground into swamps of mud, which put an end for a time to military activity on both sides, apart from the ceaseless mining and sniping and occasional artillery duelling which continued from one end of the line to the other. Large working parties were kept busy during

December reclaiming and improving the Canadian trenches, which were rendered as comfortable as experience and hard work could make them. One general who passed through them told the Canadians that they were the best in the line.

Christmas week was particularly quiet, and Christmas Day itself was the finest day of the month. There was no repetition this year of the remarkable scenes during the unofficial truce of Christmas 1914. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, the murder of Nurse Cavell, and countless other German crimes committed in the name of war, had changed all that. Sir Max Aitken, in mentioning that several small parties of the enemy endeavoured to fraternize with the Canadians on Christmas Day, 1915, adds laconically: "They were dispersed by our fire". The only other intercourse was on Christmas night, when a patrol of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade encountered a large enemy party near the German lines and exchanged bombs with them. Although subsequently fired on by machine-guns, the Canadian patrol returned safely.

On New Year's Eve the Germans made other attempts to arrange a truce at various points on the Dominion front. In one case they went so far as to mount their parapets at daybreak on January 1 and shout across to the opposing trenches: "New Year Greeting!" But the Canadians were not taking any risks with men whose record for treachery, apart from their record for "frightfulness", was so black that none could safely trust them.

"In all cases", writes Sir Max Aitken, "the enemy was arrested by machine-gun and rifle-fire, while batteries were also called into action. This ended the overtures of friendliness."

The same official "eye-witness" added that in spite of the wintry conditions the health of the troops remained excellent. "Inspired by the glorious record of Canadian arms in the past year, and cheered by messages from home"—a daily cable service from Canada having just been inaugurated by the Canadian Government—"all ranks are welcoming the New Year with unflinching spirits and an unshaken confidence in approaching victory."

Patrols and snipers continued with the gunners to share most of the enterprise along the fronts of both the First and Second Canadian Divisions during the first month of 1916. One of the patrols of French-Canadians, under Lieutenant George Vanier, distinguished itself on the night of January 2–3 by blowing up a small house behind the German wires and quite close to the enemy front-line trenches. The building was known to be fortified; whether it was still occupied by the enemy remained to be seen. It needed the spirit of the trapper to cut through the heavy wire surrounding this "shack", and to creep right into it without arousing the enemy's suspicions; but the French-Canadians, who were accompanied by a corporal of a field company of Engineers, succeeded not only in doing this, but also in removing the steel loop-plates and sending them

back to the Canadian lines. As it happened the building was found unoccupied, and was prepared for demolition without attracting attention from the neighbouring German trenches. A charge of gun-cotton was laid, and successfully exploded by electricity as soon as the patrol had safely returned to their trenches. The whole incident was typical of the daring work which gave the Canadians complete ascendancy at this period in scouting and patrol work along their front. It was an ascendancy won by such men as Lieutenant H. H. Owen, of the British Columbia Battalion, who fell in the following circumstances, as related by Sir Max Aitken:—

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Within Fifty Yards of the German Lines: lunch in the Canadian trenches

"While out between the trenches with three battalion scouts, Lieutenant Owen encountered a patrol of fifteen Germans and immediately gave fight. Bombs were thrown and revolvers freely used. Four of the enemy were seen to fall. When all the bombs carried by our scouts had been thrown, Lieutenant Owen ordered them to retreat. He said, 'I am coming right after you', and remained firing his revolver at the Germans to cover the retreat of his men. After a little while, as he did not appear, Corporal Weir and Sergeant Ashby returned to look for him. The Germans had moved off, leaving their wounded on the ground. Lieutenant Owen was found lying shot through the head. Between them these two men, who had accompanied the officer on so many of their dangerous enterprises, carried him back to their trench, where shortly afterwards he died. Among those who have most distinguished themselves in the dangerous work of scouting and patrolling 'No Man's Land' none has been more conspicuous than Lieutenant Owen."

He was the only son of the Rev. C. C. Owen, rector of Christ Church, Vancouver — himself serving at the front as chaplain to one of the Canadian battalions—and had been recommended seven times for exceptional bravery in action.

The snipers of both divisions also did excellent work. Unfortunately some of their best men were lost in the course of this month by shell-fire. Among these was Sniper Patrick Riel—a relative of the famous rebel, Louis Riel—who had been among the first to join the colours at the outbreak of war, having served with a

Canadian battalion since formation in August, 1914. He had earned a reputation as one of the best snipers in the 2nd Brigade, and had twenty-nine Germans to his credit before being killed by shell-fire on January 14, 1916. Ten days before this the same battalion lost another of its crack shots —Sniper Macdonald, who, all told, had accounted for no fewer than forty-two of the enemy—also killed by shell-fire.

The month of January, 1916, closed with a gallant cutting-out expedition by parties of the North-West and Vancouver Battalions which took the enemy completely by surprise in two of the most strongly fortified sections of the German front line. Lieutenant L. A. Wilmot, of one of these battalions, who had previously been under heavy fire for several hours superintending the hazardous preliminary work of cutting lanes through the German wire, led one party of thirty men, accompanied by Lieutenants Nigel E. O'Brian and G. L. Gwyce, of the same battalion. Creeping stealthily through the wire at 2.30 a.m., the Canadians reached the enemy's parapet just as two German sentries, patrolling up and down the trench, met and exchanged greetings. As the men turned, the leading Canadians jumped down on them, and in the struggle both sentries were killed. Then, bombing and bayoneting their way down the trench, the raiders accounted for about twenty more of the enemy, destroyed a machine-gun and its emplacement, and after seven breathless minutes returned in triumph with a German under-officer—wearing the Iron Cross, and armed with a saw-edged bayonet and a revolver with flat-nosed bullets — and two other prisoners. Though wounded in the attack, Lieutenant Wilmot, who afterwards received the Military Cross, superintended the withdrawal of his party, two other members of which were slightly wounded. Lieutenant O'Brian, who personally killed several of the Germans and took others prisoners, was also decorated with the Military Cross.

The second party in this grim expedition was under Captain Duncan E. MacIntyre and Captain Kenneth C. C. Taylor, who, on creeping warily forward, found their section of the enemy's trench crowded with Germans. The first to jump over the German parapet was Captain MacIntyre, who led the way after personal reconnaissance, and acted throughout with the greatest promptness and dash. In the savage fighting which followed, some thirty of the enemy were killed or wounded, and another machine-gun and emplacement destroyed.

"Captain Taylor", writes Sir Max Aitken, "was wounded in the leg by the explosion of the bomb just as he was jumping into the enemy trench. In subsequent fighting he killed at least five of the enemy with his revolver, and when his ammunition was exhausted threw his revolver at another German and stunned him. He then seized the bayonet of a dead German and killed another one with it. During the fight he received a bullet wound in the shoulder and several bomb wounds in the back. Altogether Captain Taylor was wounded in eight places, but in spite of this he walked back unaided to our lines."

He was rewarded with the D.S.O.

also conferred upon Captain MacIntyre, who later, in the words of the *Gazette*, "showed great coolness and presence of mind in the selection of a suitable line of retirement". Three prisoners had been taken in the course

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Lieutenant Kent receiving the Military Cross

of this raid, but two of these were killed in the trench by the enemy's bombs, and the third was similarly accounted for as he was being hauled over the parapet. Our own casualties in this party, in addition to Captain Taylor, were one man killed and five wounded—two mortally. The plan adopted was very similar to that of the cutting-out expedition organized by Lieutenant-Colonel Odlum in the previous November. Both parties carried telephones into the German trench, and maintained touch throughout with battalion head-quarters. "In each case", adds Sir Max, "the signal for artillery fire was given by the last man to leave the German trenches, and within a few seconds heavy artillery and trench mortar fire was opened on the enemy's lines." This fire must have taken heavy toll of the enemy's reinforcements, who were rushing up at the time from the support trenches.

Another Canadian battalion, which has distinguished itself at Ypres, Festubert, and Givenchy, also shared in these "strafing" expeditions. Lieutenant A. S. Trimmer, of this battalion, won the Military Cross for gallantry displayed in leading one party of bombers through the German wire and inflicting severe loss on the enemy. Although wounded, he remained behind till all his men had safely withdrawn. The same decoration was awarded to Lieutenant Lewis Younger, who commanded the men covering the wire-cutting party which prepared the way for the assault, and subsequently led one of the bombing-parties with conspicuous bravery up to the enemy's trenches. He personally accounted for several of the enemy. Yet another officer of the same battalion to earn the Military Cross at this period was Lieutenant Stanley H. Kent, who similarly distinguished himself both in raiding the enemy's trenches and in leading daring reconnaissances between the lines. Sergeant E. R. Milne, also of the

same battalion, who had been awarded the D.C.M. in the *Gazette* of January 14, 1916, for a series of most gallant exploits, now earned the rarer distinction of a clasp to that decoration in one of these "cutting-out" expeditions. Though four times wounded on this occasion, he led the attacking party through the enemy's wire, and remained with his men throughout with the greatest determination.

It was towards the end of this month of January, 1916—on the 27th, to be exact—that the Prince of Wales visited the Canadian Corps. His Royal Highness inspected sections of the front trenches of both the First and Second Divisions, as well as all the Divisional and Brigade Head-quarters. Two days later followed Mr. Bonar Law, the British Colonial Secretary, himself Canadian born, who also visited the Dominion Head-quarters, and witnessed a review of the Alberta Battalion. After the march past and a brief address by the Colonial Secretary, General Turner read an Order of the Day recounting the courageous deed of Private A. H. Jackson, of this battalion, on January 11, when a large mortar shell had fallen in the midst of a party of men with whom he was working in one of the trenches. Knowing how dangerous and destructive were these shells, and realizing how little time there was for any of them to escape, Private Jackson had instantly thrown himself on the shell, at the risk of being blown to fragments, and seizing the burning fuse had wrenched it out in the nick of time. It was a deed worthy of Lieutenant Smith, V.C., whose sacrifice of his life in saving his comrades in a similar crisis in the Dardanelles had been made the subject of a Special Order to the 10th French Army, as stated on p. 41.

A similar act won the Distinguished Conduct Medal for Private W. B. Harris of one of the Vancouver battalions, and was described as follows by Sir Max Aitken:—

"Private Harris was attending the Grenade School in December, and while throwing a live bomb slipped and fell. The bomb rolled into a trench in which a number of men were standing. All of these, except one, were able to gain cover. Harris, who saw that this man was unable to move, flung himself without hesitation on top of the bomb in an effort to save his comrade. Almost immediately the bomb exploded. Harris was very seriously injured and the other man's leg broken. Both men are reported to be doing well."

Spurred by the heroism of her soldiers, and fully alive to the formidable nature of the task ahead, the Dominion Government answered the King's stirring appeal for more men by increasing her promised contribution first to 250,000, and then, on the first day of 1916, to 500,000 troops. This last magnificent response was announced by Sir Robert Borden, the Prime Minister, in his New Year message to the people of the Dominion.

"Much", he said, in making this announcement, "has had to be learned during the past fifteen months, because we were not prepared for this war. The strongest assurance of ultimate victory lies in the fact that we were not crushed. In learning that hard lesson those who forced this war upon us may be assured by the traditions of our

past that the lesson will be thoroughly learned, to the end that there shall be an enduring peace. The very character and greatness of the ideals for which we are fighting forbid us to pause until their triumph is fully assured. . . . Yesterday the authorized forces of Canada numbered 250,000, and the number of enlisted was rapidly approaching that limit. To-day, the first day of the New Year, our authorized force is 500,000. This announcement is made in token of Canada's unflinching resolve to crown the justice of our cause with victory and an abiding peace."

Canada was also doing her share in the manufacture of munitions, orders to the value of over $300,000,000 having been placed in the Dominion up to the end of 1915, fully employing some 100,000 skilled workmen. The work was carried out under the supervision of an Imperial Munitions Board, which superseded the original Dominion Shell Committee, and was responsible to the British Minister of Munitions. Altogether it was estimated that the total war orders undertaken in Canada up to the end of 1915 amounted to about $1,000,000,000. The Dominion's help in the matter of food supplies was also invaluable. The crop was not only the largest on record, but of an exceptionally fine quality. While thus increasing the production in agricultural supplies and munitions of war, every endeavour was made to practise economy among the people, with the result that the heavy adverse balance of trade which had faced Canada for many years was completely reversed, exports now greatly exceeding imports.

The financial resourcefulness of the Dominion was so remarkable as to be described by one journal, the Toronto *Daily News*, as "The Canadian Miracle". For years before the outbreak of the war, it was pointed out, Canada had financed a great national development largely with the aid of annual borrowings in the British market, and grave fears for the future were expressed by Canadian financiers now that their chief monetary prop was in danger of being suddenly knocked from under them. Eighteen months of war not only proved these fears groundless, but converted the Dominion from a condition of dependence to one in which she could lend assistance.

"At the end of 1913 no sane person would have believed such a transformation possible under any conceivable circumstances. With the aid of a providentially large crop Canada has achieved the impossible. A country which thought it could not manage without $300,000,000 a year from the Mother Country is actually loaning the Imperial Treasury money to finance war orders on this side of the Atlantic. As the Finance Minister has said, this loan of $50,000,000 and the promise of a further loan of $75,000,000 to the British Government by Canadian bankers must be accepted as marking a new epoch in the financial history of the Empire. To that extent for the time being the Dominion has been changed from a debtor into a creditor nation. There is no exaggeration in saying that a miracle has thus been wrought before our eyes."

Canada, therefore, at the beginning of 1916 was immeasurably stronger than ever, both as a nation within itself and as a nation within the Empire.

F. A. M.

CHAPTER X

THE SECOND WINTER ON THE BRITISH FRONT

(November, 1915–March, 1916)

Winter in the Fighting Line—Brilliant Exploit of Somerset Light Infantry—How Colonel Howard Died—"Winter Sports" in Full Swing—Some of the Cutting-out Expeditions—Among the Fighting Patrols—Our 3rd Army below Arras—Operations of the 1st and 2nd Armies—Gallant Exploits of Guards and "Die-hards"—Heroic Work round Ypres—Four V.C.s—Yorkshire Grit—Sir Douglas Haig on the Winter Campaign—Developments of the War in the Air—Thrilling Aerial Feats of Lieutenant Insall and Captain Loraine—Other Heroes of the Royal Flying Corps—Christmas and New Year in the Trenches—The Carol of the Guns—Memorable Visit of a Naval Party—How the "Handy Men" Rose to the Occasion—New Year Greetings between the Allied Armies and Rulers—Early Operations of 1916—German Preparations for Verdun—Feint Assaults on the British Front—Renewed Attacks round Ypres—The Battle for the Bluff—Lost and Won again—Ready for the Next Great Round.

IN an earlier chapter some mention was made of the vital changes in the French and British Higher Commands, and the proper co-ordination of Allied strategy, which brought the year 1915 to a close and marked an epoch in the history of the Great World War, but something yet remains to be written of the men in the fighting line during this otherwise indecisive period. The story of most of the British front closely resembles that which has just been recorded of the lively section held by the Canadians in Flanders. Winter again brought rain and mud and relative stagnation all along the line, but, though no great offensive was attempted by either army, the daily and nightly struggle went on unceasingly, with greater or less intensity according to local circumstances. The Germans, unfortunately, still held their points of vantage on superior ground, and took remorseless toll with their artillery. Our troops, however, were no longer at a disadvantage from lack of guns and munitions, and had long since established their individual supremacy. "When all this deadly mechanical trickery of war can be swept aside, and the Briton meets the German as man to man," as one of our officers wrote at the time, "the German scurries away, and does not make any pretence of equality." This was apropos of what the officer called "a jolly little raid in the Huns' trenches" by a company of a new regiment "from the hearty, wholesome West of England", led by their colonel, who, though begged not to accompany them, insisted on doing so. The commanding officer was Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis C. Howard, who, with several of his brother officers, was decorated for a successful raid on the German trenches near Armentières during the night of December 15–16, 1915. The first news which the enemy had of their arrival on this occasion was when Second-Lieutenant F. D. Withers, in command of the leading company, leapt into the trench and shot down the sentry with his revolver.

"Then," writes the officer in the letter referred to, published in the *Morning Post*, "like a huge Rugby rush on the ball, the English soldiers were over the German parapet, their colonel at their head, shouting gaily, cheering, shooting. The Huns would not make a fight of it. Most of them scurried away like frightened rabbits to the communication trenches. Others

Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis C. Howard, Somerset Light Infantry, decorated for a brilliant raid on the German trenches, and killed in action shortly afterwards.

threw up their hands, calling out 'Kamerad!' A German officer, who showed fight, was struck down by a loaded bomb stick—his skull crushed in . . . After twenty minutes, the allotted time, the company started back for their own trench. They had twelve prisoners, a German Maxim-gun, two bags of German bombs, and some other booty."

As soon as the raiders left the trench our artillery completed their work by bombarding the crowded communication trenches and doing considerable execution, the German guns replying with insignificant success. Our total losses were only three men killed, while the Somersets accounted for thirty or forty in the trenches alone. Lieutenant-Colonel Howard, who organized the whole affair with the greatest energy and skill, subsequently received the D.S.O. "Inspiring all ranks with enthusiasm and confidence throughout, he displayed", says the *Gazette*, "complete indifference to personal danger during the withdrawal of the raiding force under fire." Captain R. Hall Huntington, who distinguished himself on the same occasion, and, like his commanding officer, had been previously brought to notice for gallant work at Loos, also received the D.S.O., the Military Cross being awarded at the same time to Second-Lieutenant Withers. Sergeant J. Coxon, who, after jumping into the trench, was attacked by three Germans, of whom he shot two and made the third a prisoner, received the D.C.M., also conferred upon Sergeant J. Black, Corporal A. L. Fenwick, and Private A. F. Jefferies for conspicuous bravery both on this and other occasions.

The Somersets' brilliant exploit, unhappily, had a tragic sequel a few days later, when the enemy sprang a mine in the same section of No Man's Land, and a struggle ensued for the craters in the course of which Lieutenant-Colonel Howard lost his life. The Colonel had seized the craters immediately after the explosion and held them; but three days after the Somersets were relieved they were lost by another regiment, and it fell to Lieutenant-Colonel Howard

to recover them. Never willing to send anyone where he would not venture himself, he sacrificed his life on this occasion in a preliminary reconnaissance of the position with several officers of the other regiment, when a shot killed him almost instantly. A man of many parts, he was stage-manager to an American theatrical company, in which he had also played various important parts, when war broke out, whereupon he returned to rejoin the British army, in which he had already seen active service in the South African campaign. Rapid promotion in the York and Lancaster Regiment was followed by his appointment, at the age of 34, to the command of a battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry, which he made fit to stand by the side of any regiment in the British Expeditionary Force. It was while serving as a captain of his old regiment, the York and Lancasters, that the portrait now reproduced was taken.

The night raids began as a sort of sporting effort to break the monotony of trench warfare, and to keep the enemy's nerves constantly "on the jump". Some grim humorist gave them the name of "winter sports"; and it was not long before, at one point or another, they were enlivening the whole British front. On the night of the Somersets' brilliant raid in December, two battalions of the Rifle Brigade and King's Royal Rifle Corps were the heroes of a similar exploit at Cordonnerie. Before we come to this adventure, however, an earlier incident near Cordonnerie deserves to be recorded, in which two officers of the same gallant battalion of the King's Royal Rifles won the Military Cross. One of them was Lieutenant Gerald Meredith, grandson of the novelist; the other, Lieutenant H. H. de Daillon Monk. They were reconnoitring between the lines under their company officer on the night of

Official Photograph

"Winter Sports" at the Front: British infantry practising trench-raids behind the firing line

November 24–5, when their leader was killed close to the enemy's wire. With supreme devotion, and a determination that never failed, Lieutenants Meredith and Monk brought the body back to our trenches, over flooded and difficult country, and under heavy and continuous fire. It took them over an hour to reach cover with their tragic burden.

Their brother officer who distinguished himself in the "cutting-out" expedition on the night of December

15–16 was Lieutenant Felix W. Warre, who earned the Military Cross for coolness and pluck during his share of this successful affair, in which more than a score of the enemy were killed. Remaining in the raided trench until he had evacuated his own killed and wounded, he was the last man to return, and then, finding that some wounded had been left behind, he at once went back under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire and collected them. He was himself wounded while returning the second time. Three Distinguished Conduct Medals were also won by the K.R.R.C. on this occasion: by Sergeant O. Green, who killed at least two Germans, and completely cleared his portion of the trench; Sergeant E. G. Wimpey, who commanded the advanced bombers and kept back reinforcements; and Private H. Skeels, who displayed exceptional daring and inflicted heavy loss on the enemy, in spite of the difficulty of bombing owing to the mud and wet.

The raiders from the Rifle Brigade sent out two parties to cut the enemy's wire before the attack by their section of the line. They were under Lieutenant C. E. S. Rucker. Unfortunately the work was interrupted by a German listening post, and the enemy being roused the raid had to be abandoned. The British officer, however, after returning to report, took out a bombing party and, under a heavy fire, destroyed the listening post, though it was inside the German wire and close to the hostile parapet. For this fearless feat Lieutenant Rucker, who had volunteered for both duties, received the Military Cross, the D.C.M. being awarded to Corporal R. Hunt, and Privates G. J. Higgins and A. S. V. Bench, all of whom remained out over two hours, successfully cutting through the enemy's wire despite the fact that a German sentry was in view the whole time. It is interesting to turn up the telegraphic account of these operations at the time from General Head-quarters and find them tersely described on December 16 as follows:—

"Last night two small enterprises were successfully carried out near Armentières, hostile trenches being entered and the occupants disposed of. Enemy losses are estimated at seventy killed. Our losses are trifling."

This was a favourite quarter for cutting-out expeditions—perhaps due to some friendly rivalry with the Canadians a few miles away to the north. There was another British raid two nights later north-east of Ploegsteert—or Plug Street, as that most fiercely contested district was more familiarly called. The heroes on this occasion were Second-Lieutenant C. J. Cordon and nine men of the Wiltshire Regiment. In a daring reconnaissance on the preceding night that officer, with Sergeant G. H. Ingram, had penetrated the enemy's wire, and then, alone, entered the German trench. On the night of December 18–19 Second-Lieutenant Cordon returned with his party of nine, leading them through the wire, then crawling 50 yards under the enemy's parapet, and finally jumping into the hostile trench with two non-commissioned officers. He shot two Germans, and the rest of the party

Drawn by Christopher Clark

British Billets on Fire on the Western Front: quelling a dangerous outbreak

The danger in this case was increased a hundred-fold by the fact that ammunition was stored in the buildings. "Ammunition", wrote the officer who sent the sketch from which the drawing was made, "was constantly going off, and the whole business was rendered exciting by the knowledge that a sack of bombs was somewhere in the burning building."

accounted for a number of others before they were heavily counter-attacked, when he succeeded in extricating his men without a casualty. One German pinned him down during the fight, but was killed by Sergeant Ingram, who was rewarded for his bravery throughout with the D.C.M. —also conferred upon Sergeant A. W. Loveday, who gallantly held up the counter-attack by bombing, thus enabling the officer to withdraw his party without loss. For his fearless courage Second-Lieutentant Cordon received the Military Cross. Another of the Wiltshire subalterns—Second-Lieutenant B. J. Macklin—won the same decoration earlier in the month for a splendid exhibition of initiative and courage. He had taken out three men to cut wire in preparation for a surprise attack, only to find six yards of water in front of the obstruction. Nothing daunted, he crawled through the water alone and cut a lane through four rows of wire, although a listening post came within four yards of him. "After watching this post for about an hour," says the *Gazette*, "he crawled back to our lines, made his report, and then returned to bring in the men he had left behind."

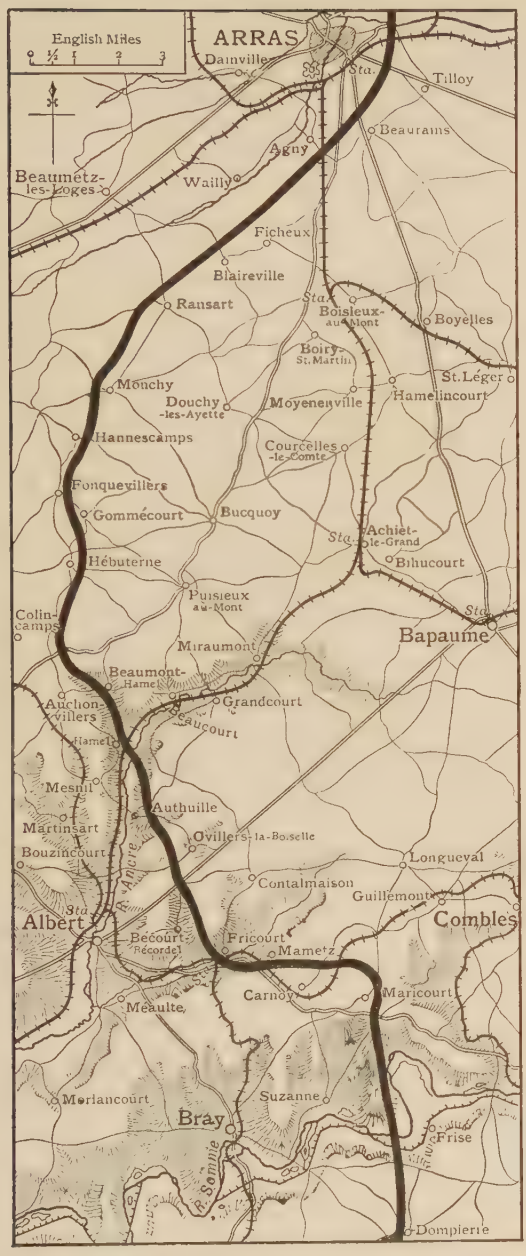
Just above "Plug Street" the line was held by the Lancashire Fusiliers, south of Warneton Railway, who joined in the raiding competition with a highly successful affair of their own on the night of December 28–29. While leading his party to the assault, Lieutenant H. H. Fowkes, with three men, outstripped the others, and lay on the enemy's parapet under heavy fire until the time arrived to jump into the trench. Then, leaping in, he bombed his way up some 50 yards, pursuing the fleeing Germans, and inflicting heavy losses upon them before withdrawing his men. His services were acknowledged with the Military Cross, which was also conferred upon Second-Lieutenant R. F. Mackinnon, of the same battalion, who, not for the first time, displayed the highest courage while leading the wire-cutters. When discovered with his assaulting party while only a few yards from the enemy's trench, he was subjected to a heavy bombardment lasting over an hour, and it was largely due to his personal bravery and resource that no casualties were suffered. Three D.C.M.'s also fell to the Lancashire Fusiliers for this exploit, the recipients being Sergeant T. A. O'Hara, Corporal A. Grindrod, and Private G. Singleton, all of whom were in the forefront of the charge down the German trench. Private Singleton was severely wounded in the attack, but refused assistance.

A few hours later Captain J. H. E. Dean with great daring led a fighting patrol from a battalion of the Cheshire Regiment up to the enemy's lines at Le Touquet, obtaining a footing on the hostile parapet and bombing the trenches for some 40 yards, inflicting considerable loss. Although under heavy fire, he succeeded in withdrawing his patrol with a loss of one killed and nine wounded. He was accompanied by Second-Lieutenant Fitz-roy A. Somerset, of the same battalion, who, although shot through the right forearm and wounded in the

head, remained at his post, and continued to throw bombs till ordered to retire. Both officers received the Military Cross, the D.C.M. being won at the same time by Corporal H. Jackson-Payne, who was wounded in three places while in charge of the right bombing-party, but persisted in continuing to throw bombs with the utmost coolness; and by Private W. Williams, who gave another fine exhibition of cool courage while in charge of the left bombing-party.

One of the first of the "cutting-out" expeditions on the British front during the period that is under review stands to the credit of a Territorial battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, at Gommecourt, south of Arras, where the 3rd British Army, about whose doings little was allowed to transpire at the time, carried the French line down towards Frise, on the Somme. Above Arras the French prolonged the line to the vicinity of Loos until that sector, during the prolonged struggle for Verdun, was also taken over by the British. It was on the night of November 25–26, 1915, that the raiders of the Gloucester Territorials were led into the German trenches at Gommecourt by Second-Lieutenants J. M. C. Badgley and T. T. Pryce, both of whom received the Military Cross for their skill and daring. Second-Lieutenant Badgley cut through two lines of wire entanglement, and though wounded in the attack itself, being met by a heavy bomb-fire on entering the German trench, and driven out by superior numbers, he withdrew his men successfully. Second-Lieutenant Pryce succeeded in entering the enemy's trenches unobserved with his party and cleared them, also bombing large numbers of Germans crowding in their deep dug-outs. He, too, was wounded, but subsequently extricated his men in face of overwhelming reinforcements. Lance-Corporal H. W. Moore won the D.C.M. for his great bravery on this occasion in entering shelters full of the enemy and clearing them with his bombs. "When he had no more bombs", adds the *Gazette*, "he fought his way through a group of Germans in order to carry an order to retire to a blocking group which had been cut off." Private W. J. Redmore, who was in the thick of the desperate hand-to-hand fighting which ensued, was another of the Gloucesters to receive the D.C.M. He was the last man to quit the trench, and as he was leaving found a corporal lying at the bottom wounded in the leg. Lifting him out of the trench, he carried him through the German wire and brought him to safety.

Our 3rd Army, whose sector between Arras and the Somme had brought the total British front in France and Flanders up to between 65 and 70 miles, had few opportunities during this period of distinguishing itself, but it held its ground with grim determination. Among other occasions on which the monotony of trench warfare was varied with an assault on the enemy's line was the bombing attack from one of the battalions of the Cheshire Regiment on the night of December 6–7, 1915, near Carnoy, between Albert and the Somme. The mud had rendered the advance almost impossible, but



Extending our Front in France: map showing approximately the line of the 3rd British Army from below Arras to its junction with the French near Frise, on the Somme, at the close of the winter campaign of 1915–16

Second-Lieutenant G. P. Harding led the attack on the German trenches with consummate coolness and ability, thereby winning the Military Cross. Three of the Cheshires earned the D.C.M. on this occasion—Private S. Bland, who, as bayonet-man, headed the assault with great dash, bayoneting one German, shooting two more, and taking one prisoner before he was himself wounded; Private J. H. Keating, for his pluck in reinforcing the blocking party when it was in danger of being driven in, keeping the men together, and helping them to repel several counter bomb-attacks; and Corporal J. Moore, who greatly assisted the attack by keeping up rapid fire while in charge of a "West" machine. In the midst of the fight "a lighted bomb", says the *Gazette*, "dropped off the cap of the machine, and would have caused many casualties, but Corporal Moore groped for it in the mud, and had just time to throw it over the parapet when it exploded". It was not far from Carnoy, a month or so later, that the Germans broke through the French line in the swampy loop of the Somme and captured the village of Frise, as mentioned on p. 100. That local attack spread to the British lines at Carnoy, but died down after taking and losing a few unimportant sapheads.

Though no general offensive during the winter of 1915–16 fell to our war-worn First and Second Armies, holding the line from Loos to Boesinghe, beyond Ypres, the daily and nightly carnage of the trenches, and the embittered combats for such points of vantage as Hooge and the Hohenzollern Redoubt, rendered these comparatively uneventful months a costly period for both sides. The main-

tenance of our defences alone entailed especially heavy work. Bad weather and the enemy, as Sir Douglas Haig pointed out in his first despatch after assuming the Chief Command of the British Forces in France and Flanders, combined to flood trenches, dug-outs, and communications, and all such damage had to be repaired promptly, under fire, and almost entirely by night. Although therefore the struggle, in a general sense, was never intense, it was everywhere continuous.

"In short," added Sir Douglas Haig, "although there has been no great incident of historic importance to record on the British front during the period under review, a steady and continuous fight has gone on, day and night, above ground and below it. The comparative monotony of this struggle has been relieved at short intervals by sharp local actions, some of which, although individually almost insignificant in a war on such an immense scale, would have been thought worthy of a separate despatch under different conditions, while their cumulative effect, though difficult to appraise at its true value now, will doubtless prove hereafter to have been considerable."

The art of mine exploding was developed with appalling ingenuity, and in course of time the Germans —for once forestalled in methods of "frightfulness" in warfare — adopted our invention of the "cutting-out" expedition and adapted it to their own ideas of how such purely barbaric fighting should be conducted. They usually relied more on their preliminary bombardment to clear a safe path for their raiding parties, and maintained a curtain of fire round the chosen sector while their raiders were at work. The horrible hand-to-hand conflicts which followed in the isolated trenches may be better imagined than described. The Germans — perhaps from their faith in large numbers, and their difficulty in finding the right type of man for dashes in handfuls—took care to send what they considered to be an overwhelming force, but the result was not always what they anticipated. Sometimes they were forced to beat an ignominious retreat. Sometimes they found their quarry flown—merely to return as soon as the raiders' appointed time arrived for their withdrawal. But sometimes their success was too horrible for words.

Lord French's Successor: General Sir Douglas Haig at the General Staff Head-quarters of the French Army

On the whole, however, the new warfare was more suited to the British temperament, with its quick initiative and eagerness for the sporting chance, than the less individualistic German. Our superiority in this respect was unquestioned throughout the winter, by which time, too, we were beginning to beat the enemy at his equally dangerous game of sniping. With his immense superiority in numbers to choose from, he had half a dozen sharpshooters to our one at the beginning of the war, and the combination of courage, cunning, and deadly accuracy which characterized most of these Jägers gave the enemy an advantage for which we had to pay dearly for many months. By the winter of 1915–16, however, our own picked men had been trained and organized for our new force of snipers: Bisley marksmen, crack shots from the backwoods, gamekeepers, and the most promising raw material among the New Army recruits, all of whom, thoroughly instructed in the whole art and craft of modern sniping, by experts in our new training schools, gradually put an entirely new complexion on this harassing species of warfare.

One of the most dashing raids from the British front occurred during the last month of 1915, and was led by Lieutenant Keith Trevor of the Middlesex Regiment, who had with him only a handful of seven "Die-Hards". This was on the night of December 14–15, when, after creeping stealthily from the British lines at the Bois Français, they were discovered within ten yards of the German trench and fired at. Pushing fearlessly on they got through the wire in the darkness, and rushed the trench. Bombing the first dug-out, "with good results" as the unimaginative *Gazette* expresses it, the raiders found themselves counter-attacked by fifteen Germans, who were driven back, however, largely by a single-handed bombing display by Private L. Kossak. Lieutenant Trevor himself threw bombs, though severely wounded in the wrist, and finally withdrew his party with complete success. He won the Military Cross for this affair, as well as for consistent courage in carrying out many dangerous reconnaissances, usually accompanied by Privates Kossak and A. A. Alma, both of whom were rewarded with the D.C.M.

While the "Die-hards" were worthily winning fresh laurels at the Bois Français the Grenadier Guards, now holding part of the line in the Neuve Chapelle region, were similarly engaged in the lines opposite Le Tilleloy. Captain Sir Robert Marcus Filmer, Bart., who had served with the Grenadiers in the Soudan and South Africa, prepared the way for the raid by a bold reconnaissance of the German position, crawling down the entire length of the trench to a point at which it joined another, thus discovering the best points of attack and the weak spots in the wire. "The success of the enterprise", says the *Gazette* in recording his award of the Military Cross, "was largely due to his reconnaissance and subsequent gallant conduct in the trenches." The same decoration was won by Second-Lieutenant the Hon. W. Alastair

Damer Parnell, of the Grenadier Guards, who had brought back very valuable information from a reconnoitring patrol on the previous night, when he entered the German trenches. The younger brother and heir-presumptive of the sixth Lord Congleton —then serving as a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, whose elder brother, the fifth Baron, had been killed in action with the Grenadier Guards in the early months of the war—he had crept through the German wire on the night of the raid itself, and, rushing the trench, surprised one of the enemy posts, two of whom were killed, one taken prisoner, and the rest dispersed. The prisoner was seized by Sergeant J. Lyon, of the same battalion, and held with great tenacity, although an attempt at rescue was made by another party of Germans. Sergeant Lyon's capture, as well as his pluck in accompanying Second-Lieutenant Parnell on the preliminary patrol, brought him the D.C.M.

The Guards had moved into these lines near Neuve Chapelle in November. When we last heard of the Division, it will be remembered, it had just passed through the ordeal of the October struggle for the Hohenzollern Redoubt, after straightening out the salient round Loos. Now it had settled down to the routine of trench warfare along a quieter sector of the front, working hard, under the usual bombardments, to make the trenches liveable through the long winter months, training new units in the science and discipline of the fighting line, and varying the monotony with occasional forays in the dark. There was a good deal of liveliness on the Grenadiers' front at this period. Private W. N. Sweetman, of one battalion, won the D.C.M. for the leading part which he played in another successful attack on the trenches of the enemy, this time on the night of December 11–12.

"When the retirement was ordered", says the official record, "he remained within 50 yards of the enemy's trench, with Lieutenant Ponsonby, who was wounded, and finally succeeded, under a heavy fire, in getting him to within 100 yards of our trenches, when, with assistance, the wounded officer was brought in. It was a fine display of cool bravery."

Two nights earlier the D.C.M. had been won by Corporal J. Riley, of another battalion, whose exploits were typical of the adventures which made the hours of darkness in No-Man's-Land anything but uneventful. Corporal Riley went out by himself on the night of December 9 to examine the German wire. He was armed with a revolver and some bombs. Before he could complete his task he was discovered by a German covering-party, who called out "Hands up!" His reply was a bomb, and a run for his life. Unable to see, he fell into a hole, and hurrying footsteps told him that he was being pursued. He turned, threw another bomb, and then opened fire with his revolver. This effectually stopped the pursuit, but not before the gallant Corporal had been hit in the foot by a bullet. However, he succeeded in crawling back to our wire, and was carried thence into our trench.

It was in the same sanguinary region, towards the end of November,

that one of the Territorial battalions of the Sherwood Foresters added to the honours of that fine regiment by a determined bombing-attack on the German trenches opposite the position known as the Boer's Head, near Neuve Chapelle. Second-Lieutenant W. A. Lytle won his Military Cross for excellent work in this connection, first reconnoitring the ground with the utmost coolness, and then leading his grenadiers in the attack itself with a total disregard for danger. He was finally forced to withdraw in the face of superior numbers, but not before he had thrown about 100 bombs and inflicted serious loss on the enemy. Lance-Sergeant M. Limb and Lance-Corporal M. C. Rust both won the D.C.M. for behaving with great gallantry on this occasion.

Some of the bravest deeds of the closing months of 1915 were done on patrol duty in these hours of darkness on the British front. It was on one such occasion, at La Brique, between Pilkem and Ypres, on the night of November 23, that Corporal Alfred Drake, of a battalion of the Rifle Brigade, won the posthumous honour of the Victoria Cross for a noble example of self-sacrifice and devotion. He was one of a reconnoitring patrol of four which was discovered when close to the enemy, who opened heavy fire with rifles and a machine-gun, wounding the officer and one man. One of the two survivors carried his comrade back, while Corporal Drake remained with his officer, and was last seen beside him bandaging his wounds, regardless of the enemy's fire.

"Later," adds the *Gazette*, "a rescue-party crawling near the German lines found the officer and corporal, the former unconscious but alive and bandaged, Corporal Drake beside him dead and riddled with bullets. He had given his own life and saved his officer."

Three attempts at rescue had failed, and an officer and four men had been wounded before the fourth and successful effort was made. This last gallant party, for which both Lieutenant C. Roper Gorell-Barnes, Adjutant of the same battalion, and a brother officer, Lieutenant A. Ronald Backus, volunteered, was guided by Private J. E. Beazley, who had brought in his wounded comrade, and was the only man remaining of the destroyed patrol. He had already made one unsuccessful effort to reach the wounded officer and corporal still lying out in front of the German lines. Bright moonlight now added to the danger of the task, and a German covering-party was heard close by as the rescuers crawled out towards the enemy's line. This time, however, they succeeded in finding the wounded officer, and with great difficulty dragged him back under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, thus undoubtedly saving his life. For their share in this heroic incident Lieutenant Gorell-Barnes received the D.S.O., Lieutenant Backus the Military Cross, and Private Beazley the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Another V.C., for similar valour and devotion, was earned, on the 4th of November, 1915, near La Houssoie, by Private Thomas Kenny, of the Durham Light Infantry, while on patrol duty with Lieutenant Brown in a thick fog. Suddenly some Germans, who were lying out in a ditch in front of

their parapet, opened fire and shot Lieutenant Brown through both thighs.

"Private Kenny," records the *Gazette*, "although heavily and repeatedly fired upon, crawled about for more than an hour with his wounded officer on his back, trying to find his way through the fog to our trenches. He refused more than once to go on alone, although told by Lieutenant Brown to do so. At last, when utterly exhausted, he came to a ditch which he recognized, placed Lieutenant Brown in it, and went to look for help. He found an officer and a few men of his battalion at a listening-post, and after guiding them back, with their assistance Lieutenant Brown was brought in, although the Germans again opened heavy fire with rifles and machine-guns, and threw bombs at 30 yards distance. Private Kenny's pluck, endurance, and devotion to duty were beyond praise."

A few weeks later another gallant officer of the Durham Light Infantry —this time not far from Armentières —was severely wounded while on night patrol beyond our wire. He was saved by Sergeant J. Broderick, who carried him in, and won the D.C.M.

It was close by the scene of the Rifle Brigade's heroism, near Ypres, where Corporal Drake won his posthumous honour, that another Victoria Cross was nobly earned only a few days before—on the 16th of November, 1915—by Private John Caffrey, of the York and Lancaster Regiment. A man of the West Yorkshire Regiment fell badly wounded and was lying in the open unable to move, in full view of the enemy's trenches, some 300 to 400 yards away. Corporal A. J. Stirk, of the Royal Army Medical Corps, who subsequently received the D.C.M., and Private Caffrey, at once started out to rescue him, but at the first attempt they were driven back by shrapnel fire.

"Soon afterwards they started again under close sniping and machine-gun fire, and succeeded in reaching and bandaging the wounded man; but, just as Corporal Stirk had lifted him on Private Caffrey's back, he himself was shot in the head. Private Caffrey put down the wounded man, bandaged Corporal Stirk, and helped him back into safety. He then returned and brought in the man of the West Yorkshire Regiment. He had made three journeys across the open under close and accurate fire, and had risked his own life to save others with the utmost coolness and bravery."

The West Yorkshires also shared in the highest honours won in this phase of the campaign round the fiercely contested Ypres salient. On November 19, Corporal Samuel Meekosha, of one of the Bradford Territorial battalions of that regiment—a Russian Pole on his father's side and Irish on his mother's—was with a platoon of some twenty non-commissioned officers and men who were holding an isolated trench, known as the "Pump Room", on the Yser Canal. During a heavy bombardment by the enemy, six of the platoon were killed and seven wounded, while all the remainder were more or less buried.

"When the senior non-commissioned officers had been either killed or wounded," says the *Gazette* in announcing his award of the Victoria Cross, "Corporal Meekosha at once took command, sent a runner for assistance, and, in spite of no less than ten more big shells falling within 20 yards of him, continued to dig out the wounded and

Drawn by A. Forestier

Perils of Patrol Work in "No-Man's-Land": British patrol hiding from the glare of one of the German light-producing rockets

The only chance for the patrol caught by this light-shell rocket from the German trenches was to lie face downwards, in the hope that they might escape the watching eyes along the enemy's line. Similar effects were produced by means of light-ball cartridges, shot from a special pistol, and other light-producing projectiles. The rockets showed comparatively little light during their flight, but then burst with a dazzling glare, making the "No-man's-Land" between the trenches as light as day. The British trenches may be seen on the left, protected, like the German positions, with wire entanglements. The trapped patrol are shown with their revolvers ready for use if discovered.

buried men in full view of the enemy and at close range from the German trenches. By his promptness and magnificent courage and determination he saved at least four lives."

Corporal Meekosha was bravely assisted by Privates Wilkinson, E. Johnson, and J. Sayers, who stuck to him most stoutly throughout, and were each rewarded with the D.C.M. One of the Leeds Territorial battalions of the same regiment had a number of similar ordeals to face in their battered trenches on the Yser Canal. On November 6 Private A. Dodd went to the rescue of two wounded men under very heavy shell and trench-mortar fire, when, owing to the trench having been blown in, stretcher-bearers were unable to reach them. After dressing their wounds and bringing them safely away, he returned and extricated a partly-buried man, who, unfortunately, was found to be dead. On the same day, when four other men had been buried near Turco Farm by the enemy's devastating fire, Sergeants A. L. Pearson, Corporal E. Green, and Private A. Benson displayed equal valour and devotion, successfully rescuing all four, although they were in full view of the enemy's fire-trench, and were being shelled by a high-velocity quick-firing gun. With Private Dodd they all received the D.C.M. Two days later one of the sergeants of the Leeds Rifles had his leg crushed by the blowing in of a dug-out, and Captain H. J. Burke, attached to the regiment from the Royal Army Medical Corps, found immediate amputation necessary. With absolute fearlessness, in order to save time, he crawled across the open to get his instruments. The enemy turned a machine-gun on him, but in spite of their fire he returned the same way, and coolly performed the operation in the trench in the midst of the heavy bombardment. Captain Burke received the Military Cross for this superb act of courage, the same decoration being bestowed upon Second-Lieutenant Campbell K. Alexander, who assisted him under fire, although he had no medical knowledge. On November 11 Second-Lieutenant Alexander was again to the front at Hale Farm, when he gallantly helped to dig out two men who had been buried, while the enemy were shelling the place with their howitzers. In this work he was nobly assisted by Private W. Stead, also of the Leeds Rifles, whose reward was the D.C.M. Three other Distinguished Conduct Medals fell to another Territorial battalion of the West Yorkshires on December 8, when one of their trenches on the Yser Canal was blown in and a bombing-post wrecked. One was awarded to Lance-Corporal J. T. Cowgill, who was in charge of the post when five bombers were buried. Working in an extremely exposed position he at once extricated them, and then went 200 yards over dangerous ground to report to his officer, afterwards returning to his post and holding it until relieved. Lance-Corporal H. Ingleby, similarly decorated, "took charge of his platoon", states the *Gazette*, "when the senior non-commissioned officers were killed or wounded, moved it to a better position, recovered, under heavy fire, several rifles and much equipment

from a trench which had been blown in, dug out a wounded man, and organized the removal of the wounded". After that it seems almost superfluous to add that Corporal Ingleby "set a fine example of cool bravery". The third D.C.M. was won by Private J. W. Worth, who, at great personal risk, rescued two sergeants and two men who had been buried under the parapet. Immediately after the rescue a heavy shell burst on the exact spot.

About a fortnight previously two men of a battalion of the West Riding Regiment gave an equally fine exhibition of Yorkshire grit on the other side of Ypres, near "Hell-Fire Corner", on the Menin road, when a small party of another regiment had come suddenly under heavy shrapnel fire and had taken cover. One man was wounded and fell on the road, where Second-Lieutenant R. Macfarlane Neill, attached to the West Ridings from the Royal Scots Fusiliers, remained with him, bandaging his wounds. Lance-Corporal A. Clarkson and Private J. Ainley, both of the West Ridings, rushed to the rescue from their dressing-station, and, with the officer's assistance, succeeded in getting the wounded man on to a stretcher, and finally in bringing him safely in under heavy fire, a distance of several hundred yards, although on the way the concussion of one shell knocked the whole party down. For this deed the officer was awarded the Military Cross, and the men the D.C.M. Two other D.C.M.'s fell to this battalion of the West Riding Regiment near Hooge, on November 22, when Lance-Corporal R. Rossall and Sergeant H. Pearson went out to the rescue of a corporal of their battalion who had been mortally wounded on bombing patrol not more than 10 yards from the German trenches. A German patrol was advancing towards them at the time, but Lance-Corporal Rossall drove them off with bombs, and then, with the sergeant's help, brought in their wounded comrade.

The only serious attempt against our Ypres line before the end of the year was a gas attack north-east of the town, on December 19, accompanied by a heavy bombardment. It was the very day on which Sir Douglas Haig took over the Chief Command from Lord French. The attack, however, had been expected, and our protective measures proved effective against the poisonous fumes behind which the Germans, massed in their trenches to complete their insidious work, waited for the most part in vain for an opportunity to charge. Our guns had their range exactly, and, except in a few places, where they were killed or driven back before reaching our line, they were kept pinned to their trenches.

So the ruthless struggle raged throughout the long winter months of 1915–16. The story at this stage is necessarily a chapter of incidents, but the record of such incidents enables us to form some idea of what the armies had to face, as well as the way in which they faced it, along their 60 to 70 miles of trenches in France and Flanders. These conditions prevailed for months after Sir Douglas Haig assumed the High Command on December 19, 1915, and they are well

summarized in the following extract from his first despatch:—

"Artillery and snipers are practically never silent, patrols are out in front of the lines every night, and heavy bombardments by the artillery of one or both sides take place daily in various parts of the line. Below ground there are continual mining and counter-mining, which, by the ever-present threat of sudden explosion and the uncertainty as to when and where it will take place, causes perhaps a more constant strain than any other form of warfare. In the air there is seldom a day, however bad the weather, when aircraft are not busy reconnoitring, photographing, and observing fire. All this is taking place constantly at any hour of the day or night, and in any part of the line."

The perils of the air had considerably increased at this period with the development in the German aeroplane service through the advent of their new Fokker machine, described on pp. 55–7, but nothing could daunt the ardent spirits of our officers of the Royal Flying Corps. One of the finest exhibitions of valour and efficiency in the whole history of this aerial warfare was witnessed on November 7, 1915, when Second-Lieutenant G. S. M. Insall, of the Royal Flying Corps, was patrolling in a Vickers fighting-machine with First-class Air Mechanic Donald as gunner, and on sighting a German machine near Achiet at once gave chase. With a favourite trick of the enemy, the German pilot led his pursuers over a rocket battery, but with great skill Lieutenant Insall dived to close range, so that Donald could fire a drum of cartridges into the enemy's machine. This stopped the German engine, whereupon the pursued pilot dived through a cloud, still followed by Lieutenant Insall. Fire was again opened, and this time the enemy machine was brought down heavily in a ploughed field 4 miles south-east of Arras.

"On seeing the Germans scramble out of their machine and prepare to fire," says the *Gazette*, "Lieutenant Insall dived to 500 feet, thus enabling Donald to open heavy fire on them. The Germans then fled, one helping the other, who was apparently wounded. Other Germans then commenced heavy fire, but in spite of this Lieutenant Insall turned again, and an incendiary bomb was dropped on the German machine, which was last seen wreathed in smoke. Lieutenant Insall then headed west in order to get back over the German trenches, but as he was at only 2000 feet altitude he dived across them for greater speed, Donald firing into the trenches as he passed over. The German fire, however, damaged the petrol

Second-Lieutenant G. S. M. Insall, who won the Victoria Cross while serving with the Royal Flying Corps
(From a photograph by Hana)

Captain Robert Loraine, the actor, who won the Military Cross while serving with the Royal Flying Corps
(From a photograph by Ellis & Walery)

tank, and, with great coolness, Lieutenant Insall landed under cover of a wood 500 yards inside our lines."

The German gunners rained some 150 shells on the ground in the hope of revenge, but failed to cause any material damage. Rifle-fire, however, had played havoc with the machine in parts; but during the night it was repaired behind screened lights, and at dawn Lieutenant Insall, with Donald on board, flew his machine home. For this brilliant feat he was decorated with the Victoria Cross, and his mechanic Donald with the D.C.M. A few months later, unfortunately, the officer was brought down behind the German lines and made a prisoner of war.

Some ten days before Lieutenant Insall earned his V.C. the Military Cross was won by Captain Robert Loraine, the actor, for a more thrilling "turn" than he was ever likely to give on the British stage. An ardent aviator before the war, he was now on the special reserve of the Royal Flying Corps, and on the occasion in question fought a successful duel with a German Albatross biplane. Attacking it within 15 yards, at a height of 9000 feet, he forced the enemy to dive, following the hostile machine to 600 feet, when it fell in our lines. The German pilot was hit, and his camera and wireless transmitter were found to have bullet-holes through them. The British gunner was Lieutenant the Hon. E. Fox Pitt Lubbock, a younger son of the first Lord Avebury, attached to the Royal Flying Corps from the Army Service Corps, who fired deliberately and with effect during that breathless and almost vertical dive, when the pilot was fully occupied. He, too, received the Military Cross; also won for similar deeds of daring during these closing months of 1915 by Second-Lieutenant H. S. Shield, Royal Flying Corps, Second-Lieutenant S. H. Long, attached to the same corps, from the Durham Light Infantry, Captain G. A. K. Lawrence, Royal Artillery and Royal Flying Corps, whose machine on one occasion was hit in no fewer than seventy places, in spite of which he carried on and completed his three-hour reconnaissance; and Lieutenant G. Lindsay Cruickshank, Gordon Highlanders and Royal Flying Corps, for "successfully carrying out a special mission involving very great risk".

On November 28 Lieutenant (Tem-

porary Captain) G. L. P. Henderson, of the Special Reserve of the Royal Flying Corps, crowned a nine months' record of "conspicuous and consistent gallantry and skill" and won the Military Cross by an exciting series of attacks in the air between Lille and La Bassée, in the course of which he drove down one Albatross, put two other hostile machines to flight, and then, under anti-aircraft fire, chased two more machines and drove them off. Four days later, when on escort to a bombing expedition near Don, he was hit in the head by a bullet while fighting a German machine; but, though partially stunned and half-blinded, he succeeded in bringing his own machine back to his aerodrome. Another fine record with the Royal Flying Corps, also extending over nine months, was rewarded with the D.S.O. on December 19, when Captain M. M'Bean Bell-Irving, of the Special Reserve, successfully engaged three hostile machines between Lille and Ypres.

"The first", says the *Gazette*, "he drove off, the second he sent to the ground in flames, and the third nose-dived and disappeared. He was then attacked by three other hostile machines from above, but he flew off towards Ypres, and chased a machine he saw in that direction. He overhauled it, and had got to within 100 yards, when he was wounded by a shell and had to return."

The new year soon added to these well-earned laurels of the Royal Flying Corps. One of the first honours of 1916, if not the very first, was the Military Cross awarded to Captain W. D. S. Sanday, who went out on January 1 in a very high wind to observe the fire of a battery near Hulluch, and owing to the clouds was forced to fly at a height of no more than between 800 and 900 feet. Nothing daunted by the heavy rifle-fire to which he was continually subjected, he did not return until he had enabled our battery to score several direct hits. One of the youngest heroes of the Buffs, Second-Lieutenant Frank Hudson, attached to the Royal Flying Corps, was similarly decorated in the early months of this year for skill and gallantry on several occasions. "This young officer", to quote from the *Gazette*, "is only eighteen years of age, but has many times driven off enemy

Aeroplanes on the German Front: an Albatross biplane

machines and twice forced them to the ground." Once he was severely wounded in the head, but successfully completed his aerial reconnaissance, although after recrossing our line and landing at an aerodrome he at once lost consciousness. More dramatic still was the magnificent feat of Lieutenant M. Henderson, of the Seaforth Highlanders and Royal Flying Corps, who was struck by a shell from a German anti-aircraft gun. The shell passed through the nacelle of Lieutenant Henderson's machine and took off his left leg just below the knee; but in spite of this he succeeded in descending from a height of 7000 feet and landing 3000 yards behind our line, thus saving his aeroplane and the life of the observer as well. For this he received the D.S.O.

It was about this period that the Fokker monoplanes, with their powers of rapid climbing and quick pursuit, enabled the Germans to challenge the undoubted supremacy hitherto obtained by the Royal Flying Corps over the enemy on the Western front. During the first year of the war the ascendancy of the British air service had been remarkable. More than anything else, as the Under-Secretary for War pointed out in reply to criticisms in the House of Commons, it had been a moral ascendancy, and not due to the superiority of our engines. The Germans "hardly dared to go over the British lines at all, showing how greatly superior we were in men and material". It was amazing, added Mr. Tennant, that they had not wakened up earlier to the situation.

"They had done so now; they had provided themselves with better machines than they had formerly possessed, though not machines as good as ours—and at this late period of the war they had arrived at the position of being able to encounter our airmen in the air."

The Fokker development came somewhat as a surprise, and we had to pay the penalty, but the new tactics were soon met "quite satisfactorily". Our aerial reconnaissances, though under more hazardous conditions, were still carried out with the greatest possible regularity, and entirely, it was said, to the satisfaction of the new Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig. Though for the moment the majority of the German aeroplanes were probably faster than the majority of ours, that state of things was being rapidly altered.

Certain German experts, like Lieutenants Immelmann and Captain Boelke,[1] claimed formidable lists of Allied victims, but the measure of the Fokkers was soon taken by such British flyers as Lieutenant (Temporary Captain) Eustace Grenfell, of the Royal Artillery and Royal Flying Corps, who, single-handed, attacked three of these machines and brought every one down. Captain Grenfell, who, added the *Gazette*, had "shown great bravery and initiative at all times", was awarded the Military Cross for this triple event. Here is another gallant episode, similarly rewarded, the heroes in this case being Second-Lieutenant Thomas

[1] Immelmann, who claimed to have brought down fifteen machines, was himself brought down in June, 1916, by a British airman. Boelke, who, at that period, was credited with having brought down eighteen machines, was unofficially, and erroneously, reported to have been killed about the same time by a French airman.

Howe, of the Connaught Rangers and Royal Flying Corps, and Second-Lieutenant Edward Leggatt, Wiltshire Regiment and Royal Flying Corps, who first attacked one hostile machine and drove it down and then climbed again and attacked another. By a combination of good flying and shooting they hit the German pilot, damaged his machine, and forced it to descend within our lines, where both occupants were made prisoners.

The war was carried to the enemy's aerodromes, where these new machines were known to be housed. One night a daring raid was made by Captain J. E. Tennant, Scots Guards and Royal Flying Corps, who, on approaching one of the German aerodromes, shut off his engine in order to avoid giving warning, hazarding the risk of not being able to start it again. Descending to 30 feet of the sheds in which the aeroplanes were housed, his own machine was damaged by the explosion of his bombs at so low a height; but he succeeded in reaching the British aerodrome in safety. "On his return," we are officially informed, Captain Tennant, whose gallant deed was rewarded with the D.S.O., "requested permission to take another machine and repeat the operation". Another daring feat about this period was that of Second-Lieutenant Henry J. F. Yates, Royal Flying Corps, who, having been instructed to destroy an enemy waterworks, found on arrival that the place was defended by anti-aircraft guns, and infantry lying on their backs, who at once opened a fierce fire. Notwithstanding this, he pluckily descended to 600 feet, and, dropping a bomb in the very centre of

A Useful Capture by the Allies: a German Fokker monoplane brought down intact on the Western Front

the waterworks, effectually destroyed the place. This done, Lieutenant Yates, who had distinguished himself by gallant and skilful work on a previous occasion, and now earned the Military Cross, attacked a machine-gun detachment and drove it from its position by fire from his own machine-gun. With such officers as these—and their number was legion—there was little fear of the mastery of the air passing into German hands. The non-commissioned officers and men were just as keen. Their courage was exemplified in the case of Corporal C. H. Nott, who, while acting as gunner during one of these attacks in the air, was hit in the eye, and for a time, which, though short, must have seemed an eternity to the pilot, was rendered unconscious, the machine being also considerably shot about, and the engine damaged. On recovering consciousness, Corporal Nott "at once made use of his gun, with such effect that he drove off the enemy's aeroplane, which had pressed the attack". Without the fine pluck of this gallant non-commissioned officer, "who is likely to lose his eye", adds the *Gazette* in recording his award of the D.C.M., there is little doubt that the machine and personnel would have been lost. Another gunner has left a vivid account of a fight with a number of Fokker machines, in which he took part while on patrol duty some 60 miles over the enemy's lines. The Fokkers as usual attacked from the rear, with the object of swooping on the slower-moving craft like hawks on their prey, but the British machine rose to a height of between 14,000 and 15,000 feet before the fight began. Then the British flyers waited for the enemy to get near. "Mind and give them some lead", said the officer pilot; and the gunner, in the letter afterwards quoted in the *Times*, describes how he waited until the leading Fokker was "ridiculously near", and then emptied a full magazine into her. "The machine fell like a log out of sight", and the rest of the pursuers changed their tactics. The next one came more to the front, but this, too, the gunner succeeded in hitting and sending it nose-diving towards the ground; but before the British airmen could see the result another Fokker took them by surprise, and the British gunner was wounded with a bullet that went through his thigh.

"Almost at the same moment an anti-aircraft shell hit us, blowing my seat away, large pieces of shell piercing my thick leather flying-jacket. I was stunned for a time, but was in no position to do a faint, so I pulled myself together and we made for our lines, then some 50 miles away, doing 'ducks and drakes' to avoid anti-aircraft shells."

Luckily they reached the British lines in safety, and our wounded airman was soon fighting his battles over again from a more comfortable berth in a hospital at the base.

In the trenches — to retrace our steps to the infantry fighting-line on the British front—the close of the year 1915 had brought with it little desire for the unofficial truce which had led to the remarkable fraternizing during the Christmastide of 1914. As mentioned in the Canadian chapter, the *Lusitania* and Nurse Cavell

A Duel in Mid-air: drawn by a French aviator

A thrilling fight took place between the Fokker monoplane and the Farman biplane shown above. The German swooped down towards its French opponent, and the two machines were only a few inches apart when they passed each other. A second Farman hurried up, and it was one of the aviators of this machine who made the drawing now reproduced.

crimes were still unforgettable and unforgivable, and out beyond the British trenches were the dead bodies of comrades over which none could meet the enemy in any spirit of peace and goodwill. The one carol heard in most trenches on this Christmas Eve was the remorseless sound of the guns. Christmas Eve itself was ushered in by one of the Belfast battalions of the Royal Irish Rifles with a plucky deed in which Second-Lieutenant J. F. Stevenson won the Military Cross. He was returning in the small hours of the morning from a successful reconnaissance, when two of his men were killed and his own revolver was knocked out of his hand. Coming across one man who was badly wounded, he crawled with him on his back for some 50 yards, when the man was hit a second time. Again the officer got him on his back, and this time managed to carry him 200 yards, to our wire, where, with assistance, he finally got him through and back to our trenches. A few weeks previously a similar deed was placed to the credit of another battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles, also belonging to Belfast, stationed near Beaumont Hamel. Hearing that a wounded man was lying out near the German lines, Second-Lieutenant H. de la Maziere Harpur

and Company-Sergeant W. D. Magookin went to his rescue. They had to search over 350 yards before they found the missing man lying helpless only some 20 yards from a German listening-post. Though the enemy opened fire on them with rifles and machine-guns, they carried him back in safety to the British lines. The London Irish, who had been in the forefront of the fray on the first day of the Battle of Loos, again distinguished themselves on December 16, 1915, while holding an exposed position in the front line at the Quarries, near Hulluch, the stern struggle for which had never ceased since the Allied offensive had been launched on the morning of September 25. For his conspicuous gallantry and ability while in command of this exposed position, when a succession of violent bomb-attacks was delivered by the enemy, Second-Lieutenant Ronald G. Munro earned the Military Cross, and Private J. Tilley the D.C.M. During the first attack, when the barrier had been blown down and all the available London Irish bombs buried, Private Tilley sent back his remaining comrades to get more bombs, and held up the enemy single-handed at the critical point till reinforcements arrived.

Six days later three enterprising privates of the Highland Light Infantry —J. Savage, P. Donnelly, and A. Campbell — won the D.C.M. for a valiant piece of work while on a bombing patrol at Cuinchy. Stealing up to a crater close to the German wire, they reached the edge and threw sixteen bombs at the enemy working inside it. Subjected as they were to heavy rifle-fire, the enterprise was rendered the more hazardous by the heavy state of the ground, but they got away safely.

The most memorable incident of all at the turn of the year in the fighting-line was the friendly visit of a party of seamen of the Grand Fleet, who, as it happened, came in for a furious burst of strafing while in the trenches opposite a certain place about the Quarries, near Hulluch, where the London Irish, as mentioned above, had recently repelled a succession of bomb attacks. Arriving at the Western front on December 30, 1915, the naval party went into the trenches the same day, and were visiting that afternoon the very section of our front selected by the Germans for the simultaneous firing of five mines. The explosions were terrific, and could be heard for miles. Some of our troops were buried in the wreckage, and a few casualties were caused, but there was no trace of panic among the men holding the line. For a time, however, the local position was critical, and the "Handy Men" helped to save it.

"The Royal Navy party", stated the official report, "rose to the occasion splendidly. Two of them, on seeing a Vickers gun-team knocked out, manned the gun at once and kept it in action most usefully for some time. Many took rifles and fired away hard. The remainder helped to recover and assist the wounded. The Brigadier-General, in recommending that the prompt and plucky action of the navy party should be recognized, expressed his admiration of their conduct on behalf of all ranks of his brigade."

For their pluck and initiative on

this occasion Ship's-Corporal William C. Hatherly and Petty-Officer William Bright were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

Although there were no international conversations to celebrate the occasion in No-Man's-Land, the New Year was ushered in with the most cordial greetings between the Allied armies and their rulers. King George's message to the French nation and the French army eloquently expressed His Majesty's confidence in the ultimate triumph of the sacred cause for which they were all fighting—a cause, as President Poincaré said in reply, "which concerns not only the existence of the Allied countries but the liberty of all peoples". Lord French's successor at the front sent the following message on the same occasion to General Joffre:—

"*January 1, 1916.*

"I beg you to accept, in my own name and that of the British army in France, greeting and good wishes for the coming year. The year that has passed has knit yet more closely the ties that unite our two nations, and I pray and believe that in the year to come our united strength will enable us finally to drive the enemy far beyond the borders of your beloved country. I beg you to accept, on this New Year's Day, from all ranks under my command, our sentiments of deep friendship and admiration for yourself and the armies of France.

"GENERAL HAIG."

To which General Joffre replied:—

"I beg you to accept my most earnest thanks for your good wishes. I trust that the mutual confidence and co-operation of all ranks will lead to the still greater success of our combined efforts, and enable us to defeat our enemies completely. At the commencement of the New Year I wish to express, on my behalf and on behalf of the troops under my command, the feelings of deep sympathy and affectionate comradeship which we all feel for you and the British armies under your command.

"J. JOFFRE."

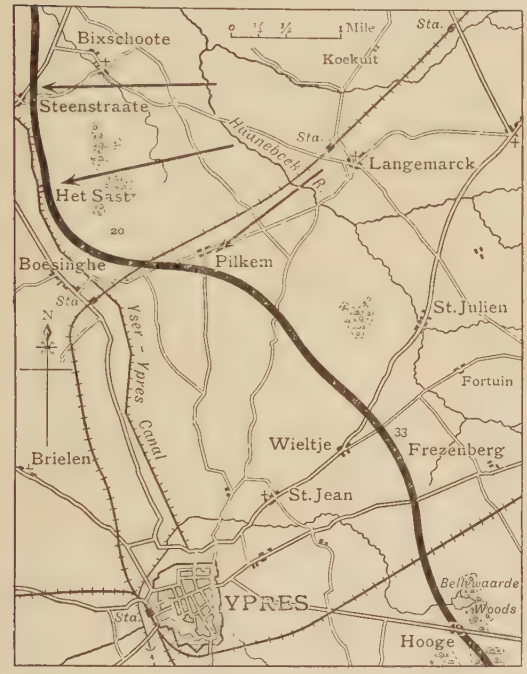
The total losses on the British front in France and Flanders down to January 9, 1916, given below from the official figures supplied by the Prime Minister to the House of Commons, showed how urgent was the need of men to repair the wastage of war, and foreshadowed the passing of the Military Service Bill a few months later. These were in addition to 148,957 casualties in the Dardanelles and other theatres of war down to the same period, making a grand total of 549,467.

FRANCE

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
Officers	5,138	10,217	1,691	17,046
Other ranks	82,130	248,990	52,344	383,464
				400,510

The most noteworthy local operations early in the new year on the British front were the series of German infantry attacks in the Ypres salient, between February 8 to 19, preceded, as a rule, by mine explosions and intense bombardment. These subsidiary operations, designed partly to secure local points of vantage, were also probably meant, as Sir Douglas Haig observed, to distract attention from the impending struggle for Verdun, which began on February 21,

1916. The first attack of 1916 round Ypres took place on February 12 at the extreme left of our line to the north of Ypres, after several days' heavy shelling over the whole of this area. Here the 4th German Army Corps, holding the front between Ypres and the sea, launched an attack



Map showing the Scene of the German Attacks on the British Line north of Ypres, February, 1916

fanwise upon the small salient marked by Steenstraate, Het Sast, and Pilkem, where the British troops linked up with the right wing of the French army, which extended "Joffre's Wall" to the point at which the Belgians completed it to the sand-dunes on the coast. Success at this point would probably have given the Germans possession of a section of the Yser Canal, from which they had been flung back after the Second Battle of Ypres, and raised fresh hopes of another bid for Calais, some 45 miles away. The formidable preparations for a great attack in this direction, however, were merely a feint to cover the real objective of the spring offensive at Verdun. A great show of serious business was made behind the German lines, and the first bombing-attack in the early morning of February 12 gave the enemy a foothold in our first line near Pilkem; but the counter-attack which was immediately organized enabled us to clear the foe out of our trenches and to pursue them to their own. The German wireless claimed that forty British prisoners were captured in this fighting, the truth being, as our own General Head-quarters pointed out, that we had only eleven men missing, of whom eight were believed to have been killed, and three lost in pursuing the enemy back to the hostile line. It was easier to prove the enemy's deliberate falsehoods in a small affair of this kind than in such titanic struggles as the approaching bid for Verdun, when his exaggerations assumed proportionate dimensions.

The threat against Ypres, in order to pin down the British army during the critical days of February, was continued in the Pilkem region to the north of the town; in the neighbourhood of Hooge, to the east; and on the bank of the Ypres-Comines Canal, to the south. In the north, after further bombardment on both sides, the German fire again increased in intensity, preparatory to another infantry assault, a second attempt then being made to rush our extreme left—

this time entirely without success. In several other places in the neighbourhood, as well as opposite the French lines beyond, the German infantry got over their parapets in scattered bodies of from 20 to 80 men, but were immediately repulsed by rifle and machine-gun fire.

"Throughout the operations", wrote Sir Douglas Haig, "our position in this part of the line remained intact, except that two isolated trenches of no tactical importance were captured by the enemy a day or two later; they were obliterated by our artillery fire. Throughout this fighting the French on our immediate left rendered us the prompt and valuable assistance we have at all times received from them."

The attacks to the east of Ypres, in the crumpled and cratered region of Hooge, were similarly dealt with. Since our own demonstrations in the same district at the time of the battle of Loos the enemy had pushed out several saps in front of his trenches, connecting them up into a firing-line some 150 yards from our positions. Here, during the whole of February 13, while his threatening operations were in progress to the north, he heavily bombarded our front-line trenches, and completely destroyed them. Following this came an intense bombardment on the afternoon of the 14th, when the enemy exploded his series of mines in front of our positions, simultaneously launching infantry attacks against Hooge and the northern and southern ends of Sanctuary Wood. Each of these attacks, however, was repulsed by our artillery, machine-gun, and rifle fire.

Farther to the south the enemy was more successful. Our position on the northern bank of the Ypres-Comines Canal was of considerable tactical value, including a narrow ridge of rising ground which had been a source of annoyance to the enemy for many months. This narrow ridge, some 30 to 40 feet high, and close, at its northern extremity, to the famous Hill 60, was covered with trees, and was probably the heap formed by excavation when the canal was made. A feature of the flat-wooded country at the southern bend of the Ypres salient, it ran outward through our territory almost into the German area, with our trenches passing over the eastern point of it. This point was known as the Bluff, and it dominated a sector in which our guns, our raiders, and our bombing patrols had long made the enemy's life wellnigh unendurable.

The Germans prepared the way for their massed attack on this annoying position by a concentrated bombardment on the afternoon of the 14th which almost obliterated our trenches, and, with the additional explosion of five mines, rendered the ruins untenable. Then, with a sudden rush of infantry at nightfall, they succeeded in capturing these and other front-line trenches north of the Bluff—some 600 yards in all. The infantry attacks extended over 4000 yards, but everywhere else were repulsed with heavy loss to the enemy. In the darkness and confusion of the assault two of our miners, emerging from one of our saps in the midst of the German invasion, had a remarkable escape. With rare presence of mind they joined the flow-

ing tide until an opportunity came to escape from the maze of ruins, when they crept back to their comrades in their new positions. Counter-attacks were at once organized, and two of the lost trenches promptly recaptured, but the enemy maintained his hold on 400 of the 600 yards of what had come to be known as the "International Trench", from the fact that it had changed hands frequently in the previous year.

On the night of the 15th–16th another counter-attack was made, our advance beginning across the open on the north side of the canal, while our bombers advanced along the communication trenches immediately north of the Bluff.

"The night", to quote from Sir Douglas Haig's dispatch, "was very dark, and heavy rain had turned the ground into a quagmire, so that progress was difficult for the attacking force, which was unable to consolidate its position in the face of heavy machine-gun and rifle fire. After the failure of this attack it was decided to adopt slower and more methodical methods of recapturing the lost trenches, and nothing of special importance occurred in the Ypres salient during the rest of the month, although both sides displayed rather more than the usual activity."

Map showing the Scene of the German Attacks East and South-east of Ypres during February, 1916

The "Bluff" and International Trench lie on the wooded hill north of the Ypres-Comines Canal and south of Hill 60.

The more methodical methods consisted chiefly of transforming the Bluff into a death-trap for the enemy. Our gunners had the range exactly and kept the battered trenches under continuous bombardment, besides maintaining a curtain of fire beyond, so that German reinforcements could only be moved up at a heavy cost. After paying this high price for seventeen days another British counter-attack not only robbed the foe of his precarious foothold, but also won, in revenge, a section of his own front line. This turning of the tables was the result of careful and elaborate planning, following a great feint on March 1 which the enemy, mistaking a sudden crescendo of artil-

lery fire for the beginning of a grand assault, fondly imagined he had effectually crushed by his own guns. When the real assault was launched at 4.29 a.m. on March 2 our infantry effected a complete surprise, finding the enemy in the International Trench with their bayonets unfixed, and many of them without rifles or equipment. In point of fact the Germans were planning a new offensive of their own at the same moment, and fresh troops, apparently, were taking over the position when the British troops charged out of the darkness into their midst. They were the right-hand assaulting party, whose objective was the Bluff, while the centre and left attacking parties carried the offensive into the German lines beyond. So completely were the Germans off their guard in the International Trench that they offered little opposition to the right-hand attack. About fifty of them took refuge in a crater at the eastern end of the Bluff, where they put up a brief resistance before disappearing in the tunnels they had constructed since their capture of the position. In these tunnels they were afterwards taken at leisure.

Meantime the centre attack, whose front line reached its assigned objective without much opposition, swept on past it to the German third line, which it seized at the eastern end of the salient.

"This line", wrote Sir Douglas Haig, in his dispatch of May 19, 1916, "was not suitable to hold permanently, but it proved useful as a temporary covering position while the captured trenches in rear were being consolidated, and at nightfall the covering party was withdrawn unmolested. The later waves of our centre attack met and captured, after some fighting, several Germans coming out of their dug-outs.

"The left attacking party, at the first attempt, failed to reach the German trenches, but those who had penetrated to the German line on the right realized the situation and brought a Lewis gun to bear on the enemy's line of resistance, completely enfilading his trenches, and thus enabling the left company to reach its goal. Thus our objective, which included a part of the German line, as well as the whole of the front lost by us on February 14, was captured, and is still held by us. Several counter-attacks were destroyed by our fire. The enemy's trenches were found full of dead as a result of our bombardment, and 5 officers and 251 other ranks were captured. The support of the heavy and field artillery and a number of trench mortars contributed largely to the success of the operation."

Elsewhere along the British front the winter campaign of 1915–16 wore away with little to vary the monotony of trench warfare and the daily toll of such operations as the mining and crater fighting in the Loos salient. We could still boast the best-fed and best-spirited army that ever took the field, and with the steady accumulation of guns and munitions, the arrival of steel helmets and all the other accessories of modern campaigning, it was in a fair way to becoming the best-equipped fighting force in the whole world-wide war. It was not privileged to share with France the glory of the defence of Verdun during the mighty battle which began on February 21, 1916, but it remained ready to co-operate throughout. It had its light amusements as well as its grim work in the fighting-line. Apart from the

Drawn by M. Ugo.

Directing an Attack on the British Front: scene at a brigade head-quarters, "somewhere in France"

No exterior appearance was allowed to make the location of Brigade Head-quarters conspicuous to enemy eyes. From this point would be directed an attack on the enemy's lines after the broad outline of the operations had been discussed at Army Head-quarters. Staff officers are shown sending their orders by the written message and the telephone along their section of the front.

crude amenities of the trenches there were recreation huts in the background, military bands in the vast training-camps of the new armies, with inter-regimental football matches, sports, occasional concerts and theatricals, and boxing competitions. But though the British army was only called upon during the period covered by Sir Douglas Haig's first dispatch to relieve our Allied troops on that part of their defensive front extending from Loos to beyond Arras, it was far from idle or inactive. It developed its partiality for raiding parties by making these at least twice or three times a week, and in every other form of local activity showed the enemy that it awaited the next round in the international fight with eager and increasing confidence.

F. A. M.

CHAPTER XI

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE IN ASIA MINOR

(April, 1915–April, 1916)

Position of Russian Army of the Caucasus after Sarikamish—From the Chorok to Lake Van and Lake Urmia—Southern Advance of Russians—Success in the Lake Van Region—First Northern Movement on Lake Tortum—Advance to Hassankala—The Deve Boyun Ridge and the Defences of Erzerum—The Principal Group of Protecting Forts—Russian Storming Attack of Tafta Forts—The Fight in the Guraji Boghar Pass—Collapse of the Turkish Defence—Captures at Erzerum and After—The Coastal Advance on Trebizond—Attack on Kara Dere Position—Force Landed West of Trebizond—Fall of Trebizond—Capture of Mush and Bitlis.

BEFORE the close of the year 1914, when German military power was far from its zenith, and when the forces of Austria-Hungary were showing their crying want of that organization which Germany presently applied to them, the Turkish armies were in process of revealing that they had scarcely any organization at all. Although to a great extent officered by Germans, and their strategy apparently dictated from German Head-quarters, the Turkish forces in Asia Minor collapsed hopelessly in the attempt to take the offensive against the Russian Army of the Caucasus. In late December, 1914, as described in an earlier chapter, General Liman von Sanders, attempting the invasion of the Caucasus with three Turkish army corps, the 9th, 10th, and 11th, was decisively defeated at Sarikamish. The 9th Corps was reduced to flying fragments, the 11th Corps, coming to its succour, was driven over the frontier at Kara-Urgan, and fell back on the fortified base of Erzerum. The 10th Corps to the northward, whose part it had been to aid the 9th and 11th by crossing the ridges and outflanking the Russian defences at Kars, behind Sarikamish, was also beaten—by the difficulty of its task as well as

by the Russian resistance—and fell back to the valley of the River Chorokh.

One of the main roads—they are few and they are not magnificent—leads from Kars to Sarikamish, and thence south-westwards across the frontier till it comes to Kopri Keui, and then turns westwards to Erzerum. General Yudenitch, the Commander of the Russian Army of the Caucasus, was now comfortably astride this main road, and there he stayed waiting for the favourable moment to prosecute his adventure. He had long to wait. The spring took the flower of his troops to Galicia, where the armies of the Dniester were struggling to repair the breach driven in the Russian line by the hammer blow of the Dunajec. It was not till August, 1915, had brought the Austro-German Eastern campaign to an end, and the "bolt had been shot" at the Wilna salient, that Yudenitch made any attempt to waken his Caucasian bears from their winter sleep. He had patiently improved his positions, and when the Grand Duke Nicholas, after handing over the titular leadership of the main armies to the Tsar, took the office of Viceroy of the Caucasus, Yudenitch's forces were strung along a line which began in the north at the Chorok River, thence due south to Lake Tortum; then at an obtuse angle, south-east, for nearly 150 miles along the caravan road to Bayazid; finally, an-

Russia's Giant Commander-in-Chief in the Caucasus: the Grand Duke Nicholas at an inspection of troops

other 100 miles south along the Turco-Persian frontier to Lake Urmia. On the north the Chorok River section protected Kars from invasion. The thinly strung line flung far to the south was to prevent an incursion of Turkish or Turco-German forces into Persia.

then there is a long stretch of desolate country bisected by the beginnings of the Euphrates, here running not south, but in a swift mountain torrent to the west, before one arrives at the great Lake Van. West of Lake Van are Mush, which is just by the young Euphrates, and Bitlis, which is 40

The Track of the War in Asia Minor: the devastated city of Van, once the capital of the Armenian kingdom

Chorok River, which rises 50 miles on the Constantinople side of Erzerum, runs between it and the Black Sea roughly parallel for 100 miles to the Black Sea's southern shore before it turns sharply northward to flow into the sea at Batoum. Lake Tortum lies between Erzerum and the Chorok valley; at its northern end is Tew, and at its southern end Ardash. The next stage south is Kopri Keui, and

miles south. Lake Urmia is far to the south-east, and the other neighbouring town which it is of importance to keep in mind, when reviewing the Russian operations in Asia Minor, is Diarbekr, nearly 100 miles west of Bitlis, and on the head waters of the Tigris. A glance at the map will show that the Euphrates flows in a great loop, which curves right round the course of the Tigris.

The character of the fighting, when the time for action arrived, differed from that of any other front. The country was everywhere mountainous and desolate, the roads hardly existent, the communications in consequence maintained with great difficulty. An advance by either army strained the transport to the utmost. The army which could best cope with this handicap was the one that would win, and other things being equal the army most likely to do so was the one that could march best. That army was the Russian army, the most enduring marchers of any Power, and apart from the strategic and organizing ability of General Yudenitch, this factor was the one which most contributed to the success attained by his forces. It was impossible to entrench the whole of that long mountainous territory where the armies confronted one another, and consequently in Asia Minor the combination of fighting and marching ability came to its own, and triumphed over that which required the protection of entrenchment to give it opportunity. The Turkish army had good soldiers, but it contained too great a proportion of raw soldiers, untrained and unhandled, to be of use unless commanded by genius.

The Russian plan made best use of the capacities of its soldiers. It pivoted on its defences before Kars and on its perfected line of communications along the Sarikamish road, and swung forward, its left wing stretching far to the south and to Lake Van. It began to push back the Turks from the district north of Lake Van (the Van vilayet) along the upper Euphrates valley, and about the middle of July reached a line stretching from Melasgerd, on the northern tip of the lake, to Ahlat. Here it came into contact with considerable Turkish forces in chosen and fortified positions. These positions the Turks continued to reinforce, having by this time apprehended the intention of the Russian movements.

In driving back the Turkish right wing during July from the valley of the upper Euphrates, the Russians occupied the vilayet of Van and the town of Van itself. Their arrival was timely for the Armenian population, for after its abandonment by the Turks it was threatened by the bands of Kurdish robbers, who acted as spies, auxiliaries, and jackals to the regular Turkish troops. The Armenians were fortunately able to organize some sort of defences of the town against the attacks of these brigands; and their resistance is one of the curious and little-known incidents of a war so vast that many such deeds of courage and endurance pass unrecognized.

General Yudenitch had to dislodge the Turks from their stronghold before their reinforcement should make it hazardous or impossible, and he consequently attacked them on the front which is called in the Russian dispatches the Kop Kormundy positions. After sustaining repeated onslaughts the Turks broke and fell back on their reinforcements, which were now coming up fast from their base at Mush, on the Euphrates. The reinforcements, together with the force driven out, made up a force of ten divisions, sufficient not only to hold the Russian

advance in check, but to open up a counter-attack. They took the offensive on July 23, and the Russians fell back before them. The Turks continued to press forward with more precipitancy than prudence, till on August 4 they found they had pushed into a trap. The Russian account of what took place is detailed, and states a wide flanking manœuvre over the mountains, and fell on the flank and towards the rear of the Turks. The point of chief attack is said to have been near Dayar. The Turks, who, like most raw troops, were very nervous of being cut off, may have overrated the size of the outflanking force; but it is clear that very great confusion

Before the Russian Occupation of Van: Armenians defending the city against the attacks of the Kurds

that the Turks, held at the Akhtin Pass and the Diadin Valley, along each of which they were pushing powerful columns, were outflanked at both places. What happened appears to have been a repetition of the manœuvre which had proved so disastrous to Liman von Sanders at Sarikamish.

The Russians, holding up the frontal attacks along the valleys, though with a show of giving way before them, used their marching ability to make in their ranks resulted, and they began to retreat with greater haste than they had advanced. The Russians pressed them hard, but from the precipitate nature of the retreat and the difficulties of the ground the captures were not large, a fact that confirms the opinion that the outflanking Russian forces were small, and that the Turks had yielded to the first threat at their communications. The surprise had been sufficient to secure for the Russians

the considerable advantage of dislodging a very large number of Turks from very useful positions; and they utilized their tactical victory with great skill. Their outflanking or enveloping column seized a pass which was a useful line of retreat for the Turks on the right or western bank of the Euphrates, and though the Turks, when the first panic of surprise was over, made determined efforts to recapture this line of retreat, they were unable to do so. They were equally unable to hold back the Russians at the Merghemin Pass, where a day-and-night battle, in which the bayonet played a much larger part than artillery, resulted in the triumph of the Russians at dawn of August 10, when the whole pass was in their hands, and the Turkish division, the 29th, which had held it was in flight. The firm hold of these two passes enabled the Russians to accelerate the pursuit and to establish themselves firmly at Chariandagh. The disorganized Turkish army retreated along the left bank of the Euphrates towards Mush, or made its way towards Bitlis; and the Russians, securely established in a valuable strategic position between Lake Van and the Euphrates, consolidated it.

There was another long pause, chequered by incidents of raids and reconnaissances of positions, and by attempts to feel the strength of established forces. The Gallipoli expedition, which had held up some of the best-equipped Turkish troops, had subsided into inertia by the autumn, and there was the dangerous prospect that Turks released from it would be sent to reinforce the Asiatic front. The German-Austro-Bulgarian attack on Serbia in the later part of the year was also a ground for suspending action, because it was not clear to what extent it would absorb the attention of the British and French forces, and so prevent them in their turn from diverting Turkish troops to other theatres of war. But by the beginning of 1916 the situation for good or bad had cleared; and it may be noted that at this time the Turks were committed as much as the British to the Mesopotamian enterprise, though with less disconcerting results. If it had been found possible to relieve Townshend at Kut, the Mesopotamian expedition would have been not unreasonably acclaimed as a valuable diversion of Turkish troops from Armenia and the region of Lake Van. It was while the Turks were preoccupied with this, the left flank of the Russian line and the nearest to their communications with Bagdad, that the first and heavier Russian blow was preparing in the north. The movement began on Monday, January 10, when the Russians surrounded Lake Tortum, 30 miles north-east of Erzerum, driving the Turks out of the village of Tew on the north of the lake, and of Ardash on the south-east. In succeeding days the Russians stiffened their positions at all points, to the north of this up to the Black Sea coast, where they occupied the little seaport of Archava. One road of advance, a caravan route, lay along the coast, and this good road could be protected by a flanking force of Russian destroyers. The Russian fleet, though unable to prevent occasional

raids on the part of the *Breslau*, had now command of the Black Sea.

A week after this first movement a general attack was made on the Turkish centre at points all along the 130-mile front, from Lake Tortum to the Upper Euphrates. The attack was prolonged for three days, and the Turks gave before it. They retreated in disorder along the roads and tracks to Erzerum. Kopri Keui, on the great main road from Kars and Sarikamish, was occupied and Turkish supplies were captured. Another three days saw General Yudenitch, his objective now declared, another stage along the road at Hassankala, where he added 1500 prisoners to war booty, and was only 20 miles from Erzerum, though the famous Deve Boyun ridge lay between.

Deve Boyun ridge is famous, because it has been the scene of struggles in the past for the fortress; and it is the basis of formidable defences against any enemy assaulting Erzerum from the east, as Seljuks, Mongols, Turks, and Russians had done successively at intervals extending over six centuries. Against modern attack and modern artillery Erzerum had been well fortified by German engineers, who had rectified the Deve Boyun forts and constructed others on a smaller perimeter about the town. Erzerum is covered on the south and west as well as on the east by high ranges. On the north of the small enclosed plain in which Erzerum stands is a marsh, through which the more northerly branch of the Euphrates flows at the beginning of its first westerly curve. There is no way for an army through this marsh; an invader, unless coming from the west, must approach the town through the three roads which pierce the eastern and southern ranges. As he must bring heavy artillery he is presumably tied to these roads. The first of them, rather poor, comes from distant Batoum, on the Black Sea, and Olty, and pierces the eastern range at the gorge of Guraji Boghar. The second, by far the best, and the main road of invasion at all epochs, comes through the range by the Camel's Pass, the Deve Boyun. It is more than 6000 feet above the sea, but only a few hundred feet above Erzerum, which stands on the high plateau of Asia Minor. The Russian railhead was only 70 miles east of this pass, and the use of the excellent road had been increased by the construction of a light railway for part of the distance. A third road, like another spoke in the wheel, comes in from the south, climbing a very high ridge of 9000 feet. It is the road from Mush.

The Russian attack on Erzerum proceeded by the two upper gates, the Guraji Boghar and the Deve Boyun, and it was the successful storming of the second and the lower of these two that decided the fate of the town. The fortifications of the Deve Boyun consisted of four groups of works. To the north of the pass, which at its summit runs through a very narrow gorge, is a very steep height called the Tafta. On these flanking northern heights were three forts, the strongest of which swept with its fire the whole of the road up to the summit of the pass, and the

others of which reinforced it and protected it. This was the master group of the system. Behind it on a ridge to the north were other works, which all contributed to protect Tafta in the event of an enemy trying to get round it instead of taking it by direct assault.

On the south of the pass is the spur called the Ahmed Dagh. The highest point was crowned with a strong fort, and all round it open works which either protected it, or commanded the road rising up to the pass and the plain of Pasine to the east. Protecting the Ahmed Dagh forts and positions were other groups of works, similar to those reinforcing Tafta on the north, and similarly designed to prevent the main fort from being approached or circumvented. These were south of Ahmed Dagh. Running through them (and supplying the military reason for them) is a ravine track which was specially covered by batteries on the Eklikhan Hill and the Tchatarli Hill. To the whole series of forts the key was Tafta, and the system had been constructed on the assumption that no besieging force would try to rush Tafta directly, but would approach it by successive and gradual reductions of its supports to the south and to the north. The Russians confounded these expectations by striking directly for the main position, and by carrying Tafta before most of the other works were reduced. The struggle began on the afternoon of Friday, February 11: by the 14th two works had been carried at the

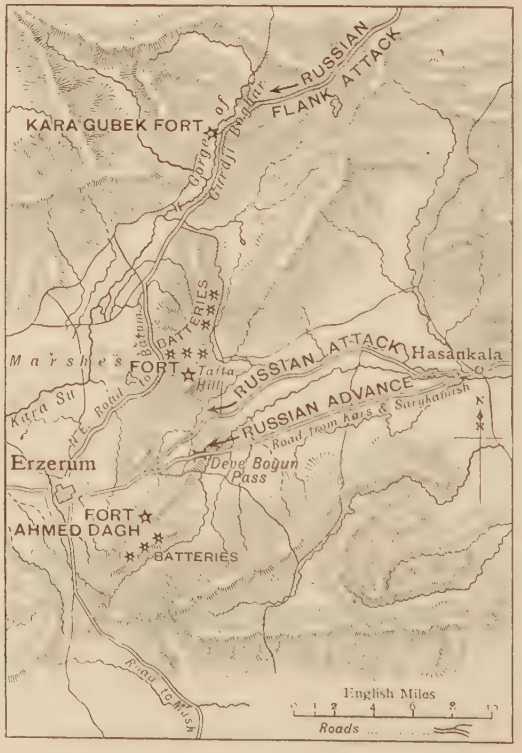
Photo. Underwood & Underwood

The Russian Advance in Turkish Armenia: general view of Erzerum

point of the bayonet, and by the afternoon of Tuesday the 15th the whole position was mastered, and the road over the pass was held by the Russians.

This feat, which filled even Russia's allies with surprise, and produced a "painful impression" at Berlin, was accomplished in one of the worst winter months of the year, amid snow and ice, and, having regard for the difficulties of bringing up heavy artillery, gave almost the impression that the Russians had taken the "impregnable" Deve Boyun fortifications with their fists. There is some ground for supposing that the Russians succeeded beyond their own expectations by seizing an opportunity which had not been thought at all likely to present itself; and that the storming of the Erzerum defences was the outcome of a sudden resolution taken by a military genius. The Russian Head-quarters strategy contemplated originally a gradual pressure over the whole of the front, with a variety of manœuvres, especially towards Lake Van, such as would mislead the Turks as to the place at which a blow would be struck at them. But the collapse of the Turkish centre, and the comparatively easy capture of Hassankala and Kopri Keui determined General Yudenitch to keep the Turks on the run, and having pursued them to the Deve Boyun gates he went through after them. But the gate at which he first knocked was not that of Deve Boyun, but of the pass farther north at the Guraji Boghar Pass. The Guraji Boghar Pass was protected by flanking forts on the Kara Gubek heights. The principal fort was well placed, so as to command the approaches to the pass, and was armed with Krupp guns. About four miles beyond the height at which this fort was situated was a saddle-like depression between two peaks of a mountain that had been neglected, in consequence of its natural difficulties, as a possible road of approach. The track through this was behind the line defended by the forts, and up it the Russians contrived to drag by man power enough heavy artillery on sledges to bombard the fort. They had the advantages of surprise, and a lucky shot found the magazine and caused a disastrous explosion in the heart of the fort.

This preliminary and unexpected success appeared to disconcert the Turkish defences, and under the im-



Map illustrating the Russian Attack on the Deve Boyun Pass and Advance on Erzerum

Russia's Achievements in Asia Minor: the Staff of the 4th Division of Chasseurs of the Caucasus encamped on the Kargabazar Plateau during the advance on Erzerum, January, 1916

pulse of the same kind of panic which had seized their field armies when their communications were threatened in the Lake Van district, their garrisons went to pieces. That explanation, if it be even partially a correct one, does not in any way detract from the fierce bravery of the sustained assault by the Russians on the Deve Boyun forts, which had to be taken, and were in fact taken by the bayonet, if the capture of the first northern fort of Kara Gubek was not to be rendered useless. The arrangement and conformation of the forts which guarded the main road into Erzerum were such that they ought to have been able to sustain an attack quite independently of the loss of the far outlying fort. It could only have been the desperate courage of the Russian infantrymen, added to the resolution and resource of the Russian artillerymen and engineers, which carried in succession first the main forts on Tafta Hill to the north of the road through the pass, and then those of Ahmed Dagh.

A little before midday on Wednesday, February 16, the Russian cavalry rode into the city along the main road through the pass, and was soon joined by the separate columns which now poured through the Guraji Boghar Pass, as well as through the high pass piercing the southern hills. One of the most curious occurrences of the Turkish flight from, and about, Erzerum took place in the neighbourhood

of the Guraji Boghar Pass. When the Russian decision to close in on Erzerum became evident to the Turks, Kiamil Pasha had ordered his wings to fall back on the fortress. But the Russian spearhead along the Hassankala - Deve - Boyun - Erzerum approaches came on more quickly than the Turks retiring parallel with their march to north and south. The 9th Turkish Division from the Lake Van region were hindered from doing so by the more rapid movement of the Russians from the Melasgerd district. But the 10th Turkish Division on the wing north of Erzerum had retired much more slowly, occasionally turning to fight the Russians. Half of this corps was outdistanced by the advance of the Russian centre, and actually approached the Guraji Boghar valley after the Russians were in possession of it. They ran into an impossible position, and a number of them capitulated forthwith. The capture and dispersion of the Turkish forces became the first object of General Yudenitch. Erzerum fell into his hands practically intact. It was quite indefensible by its closely-set inner forts when the outer approaches on the hills had been taken, and the Turks had neither made any attempt at a further stand nor had done much damage to the town before getting out of it as fast as possible. Only a few of the Government buildings and stores on the southern side had been destroyed; a considerable amount of ammunition had been left undestroyed, and few fortress guns had been blown up. The swiftness with which Erzerum fell conveyed at first an erroneous impression of the resolution and courage demanded of

The Last Stage of the Russian Triumph at Erzerum: advance guard of the investing army awaiting the final assault on the forts of the citadel

The Fall of Erzerum, February 16, 1916: effects of the Russian artillery fire outside one of the Turkish forts

the forces which took it; but though so large a number of Turkish soldiers fled without firing a shot, and though the first fugitives began to leave the town and the neighbourhood when the fort of Kara Gubek fell, the garrisons of a number of the forts died at their posts. The Russian Head-quarters *communiqué* acknowledged that the forts were full of Turkish bodies. The fort ditches, added an unofficial witness, were filled with the mass of bodies which choked them, and most had fallen at the point of the bayonet. The whole of the fortress artillery and a large part of the enemy's field artillery, in all more than 240 guns, fell into Russian hands. In the pursuit of the remains of the 10th Turkish Division, which retreated to the north-west of Erzerum, 13 field-guns, as well as machine-guns and ammunition, fell into Russian hands; and this by no means comprised the whole stock of miscellaneous booty.

The chief value of the capture of Erzerum, apart from its moral and political effect, and the use of the town as a new base at the junction of all the more important roads, was the destruction of the cohesion of the Turkish forces which had been its garrison, and which Erzerum had in its turn supported. The remnants retreated fanwise to the west, south-west, and north. From Erzerum north to the Black Sea are four roads, three of them to Trebizond, and one to Rizeh, east of it. The main road to Trebizond passes by Baiburt and Gumushaneh, and is about 200 miles long. The other roads are mule tracks.

From Erzerum westwards the great road leads to the military station of

Russian Trophies at Erzerum: two of the heavily-embroidered standards captured from the Turks

Erzingan, where the retreating Turks of Febzi Pasha's garrison were reorganized and coalesced with the reinforcements which Constantinople had dispatched too late. Erzingan is 75 miles away. The next stage westwards is Sivas, another 150 miles distant, and a road and river junction; but another 200 miles separates Sivas from railhead at Angora.

Two roads lead from Erzerum to the south-west, one going to Kharput and to Diarbekr (150 miles away), and the other over the mountains to Mush and to Bitlis, on the Tigris. Both towns were important points held by the Turks, though Mush was occupied by the Russians after the fall of Erzerum; and each had been the scene of massacres of the Armenians.

General Yudenitch sent three columns in pursuit, one along the westerly road to Erzingan, another along the main road to Trebizond, and a third along the subsidiary road northwards to Rizeh, to intercept the remnants of the Turkish army, which was heading for Trebizond along the valley of the Chorok. The first impetus of the Russian forces was now slowing, as the difficulties of transport and supply mounted; and over the rough country progress was slow. But on March 16 the first column occupied the town of Mamakhatun, 60 miles west of Erzerum and half-way to Erzingan. The column on the Trebizond road was at Ashkala by the end of February, and the third column was on the Chorok river by about the same time. There it was held up by the difficulties of the way, for it could get no farther on

the way to Rizeh and the coast through the winter passes of the mountains. Here, however, the Russian command of the Black Sea asserted itself. The Russians landed a force on March 4 at Atina, 60 miles east of Trebizond. It seized the nearest military station, and on the 7th had secured Rizeh. A new Russian force now began marching along the coast road to Trebizond.

It encountered small opposition at first, but its task became harder as it approached the town, the defences of which from the east bore a distant resemblance to those which had guarded Erzerum. The tangle of mountains which had barred the approach of the Russians to Trebizond from the south begins to fall to the Black Sea in a succession of spurs, with an occasional outlying height. One of these spurs about 15 miles east of Trebizond constitutes, with its outlier, a defensive position of great strength. Between the successive spurs short, rapid rivers flow to the sea. The Kara Dere is such a river. It rises in a gorge of the mountains, and after leaving the spur flows past an outlying height of 2000 feet, into a marsh by the sea. The country is therefore possible for troops only in the narrow space, some 10 miles in extent, between the heights whence the river descends and the mountain which guards the marsh by the sea. It was a most formidable obstacle, and with enough men to defend it would have proved almost impassable. The Russians, however, attacked it, and succeeded about the middle of April in crossing to the western side of the Kara Dere with part of their troops. It was presumed by the Turks to be waiting for reinforcements from the Chorok Valley; and as the Turkish forces numbered nominally three divisions they may

Photo. by Korsakoff

The Russian Occupation of Erzerum: Cossacks on guard, and inhabitants going about their business unmolested

have awaited the Russian attack with composure. Once again, however, they were to experience a surprise, and a new demonstration of the effect of sea power. The garrison of Trebizond had been reinforced by the *Breslau*, which made one of its meteoric appearances in the Black Sea in April; but the Russians improved on this expedition by landing a force west of Trebizond. The town, undefended and indeed indefensible, fell at once into the Russian hands, and the force guarding it to the west at Kara Dere was left without its base. Although the Russian line north to south between Trebizond and Erzerum could by no means be quickly cleared, the elements for a junction were there, and Trebizond supplied them with a new sea base, the best of its kind on that shore of the Black Sea. Trebizond is the great port of sea-borne commerce on the north shore of Asia Minor, and is a city of considerable prosperity, though it affords indifferent harbourage for ships. Like Mush and Bitlis, it suffered an atrocious massacre of its Armenian inhabitants at the hands of the Turks.

While the spear-thrust at Erzerum was being made the flank attacks at Lake Tortum and at Lake Van had been equally fruitful. The Turks holding the passes at Lake Tortum were all dislodged, and driven down to the Doumlu Dagh plateau, where the retreat degenerated into a rout. Many were captured and more died from cold and hunger; the numbers which got past Erzerum and joined the main bodies retreating northwards to Trebizond or westwards to Erzingan were few. On the distant left or southern wing the operations were equally productive of result. The left-wing army, after capturing Mush, turned farther south to Bitlis, which is an important

Map showing Lines of Russian Advance on Erzerum, Trebizond, and Bitlis

point commanding the pass over the Taurus mountains, and lying athwart the road to Bagdad. It is 120 miles away from Nisibin, the railhead of the Bagdad railway. Here, however, the Russian movement paused, awaiting reinforcement and munitions while the Turks assembled a force to oppose the advance.

E. S. G.

CHAPTER XII

INDIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS IN THE GREAT WAR

India's Help—Lord Hardinge's Tribute—Germans and Indian Anarchists—The Ghadr Conspiracies—More Princely Munificence—Loyalty of Moslem India—Turkish Treatment of Moslem Pilgrims—Islam's Revolt—Well-earned Honours for the Aga Khan—The Amir True to his Trust—Minor Troubles on the North-west Frontier—Tochi Valley and other Operations—Allegiance of the Border States—Germany's Ceaseless Designs in India—Another Plot Foiled—Fighting Record of the Indian Troops—Their Services for the Empire—Kut and the Medical Break-down in Mesopotamia—Lord Hardinge's Departure—Appointment of Lord Chelmsford—Treatment of Indian Wounded—Indian Battle Honours—Persia's Part in the War—Turco-German Plots to Capture the Shah—Difficulties of the Persian Government—How the Swedish Gendarmerie were Bought—Prince Henry of Reuss and his Intrigues—Lawlessness in the Persian Gulf—Revolt of the Gendarmerie—Russia's Counter-strokes—The Teheran Plot that Failed—Shah decides in Favour of the Allies—Russia's Successful Advance in the North—Persia, Bagdad, and Kut—General Judenich's Strategy—British Advance in Southern Persia.

"I WAS sure in my heart of hearts that India was sound", said Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy through the first eighteen months of the war, "and I never hesitated to proclaim that assurance and act upon it." Our record of India's share in all the great campaigns—in France and Flanders, Gallipoli, and Mesopotamia—as well as in Kiao-Chou, Egypt, East Africa, and elsewhere, shows how nobly her army and her Ruling Princes responded to that trust. More remarkable still was the unfailing and unshaken allegiance of the native population, without distinction of race or religion, notwithstanding the elaborate machinations and falsehoods of Germany both before and after the outbreak of war. Among a population of upwards of 300,000,000, divided by varied castes and creeds, and in all stages of intellectual development, a certain amount of unrest must always be expected, but the vain efforts of certain revolutionaries to create sedition merely served to accentuate the deep-seated loyalty of the people as a whole. Germany had reckoned without the real strength of British rule in India — the moral faith which the overwhelming majority of the people possessed not only in the inherent justice of the Government, but in its supreme power to guide its destinies.

Had this Imperial strength been based on unreliable foundations we should not have dared to denude India as we did of British troops at the beginning of the war, however sorely their help, as well as that of the Indian contingents, was needed on the battle fronts. India gave so unstintedly in those critical days — in guns, rifles, ammunition, and stores, as well as in men — that at one time there was hardly any artillery throughout the length and breadth of the Dependency, save a few batteries retained on the North-west Frontier for protection against attack from without. Thus, in those perilous early months, when our resources in artillery were proving entirely inadequate to the needs of the

The Road to the Front: Indian troops on the march

situation, India supplied to our fighting troops practically the whole of her artillery, of the most modern and up-to-date pattern. We have this on the authority of Lord Hardinge in the course of a statement to a correspondent of the *New York Times*, in which he further explained how this was possible:—

"At the outset of the war I had consultations with the leaders throughout India. I frankly exposed to them the situation and the needs of the Empire, and was assured that there would be no serious trouble in India. I believed their assurances, and my trust has been amply justified. We sent out of the country no less than 300,000 men to various fields of the Imperial battle-line in France, Egypt, China, Mesopotamia, East Africa, Gallipoli, and even the Cameroons. These consisted of both Indian and British troops. When it is remembered that the British army of occupation usually numbers some 73,000 men and that at one time for a few weeks there remained only a handful of British troops — something between 10,000 and 15,000 men—in a country with a population of over 315,000,000, one can realize that such a course of action would have been foolhardy in the extreme had there been any real foundation for the reports of widespread and serious disaffection spread from enemy sources."

It was only a temporary arrangement, for with the growth of the British army to continental dimensions the garrison of India was considerably reinforced by Territorial and garrison battalions, as well as by Territorial artillery; but the very fact that India

could be left in this fashion, even as a temporary measure, was the finest proof the world could be given of her absolute stanchness. "Britain had no need to send troops to hold her," wrote Sir Francis Younghusband. "She held to the Empire."

This steadfast loyalty was soon put to the test by the return in the winter of 1914-15 of strong groups of anarchistic Sikhs from the western parts of the United States and Canada, where they had obviously fallen under German influence. The arch-conspirator of these revolutionaries—the *Ghadr* party, as they were called, from the anarchistic paper of that name, printed abroad and surreptitiously introduced into the country—was Hardyal, who was at one time employed at the German War Ministry. At the subsequent trial of many of the malefactors in Lahore it was proved conclusively that some definite understanding existed between Hardyal and Germany, the enemy agreeing to assist the revolutionists wherever possible. Among other interesting statements placed on record in the course of that conspiracy trial were the disclosures that Germany had supplied many of the arms taken to India by the returning emigrants; that the war was urged in many secret lectures as affording the *Ghadr* party a golden opportunity; and that certain conspirators spoke of there being 75,000 rifles in Bengal, sent by Germany for their use. It was also stated that Germany was planning to send back all Indian prisoners of war by way of Persia and Afghanistan to help the revolutionists; and the stories afterwards received from the internment camps in Germany, of the preferential treatment accorded to Indian captives, seemed to confirm this. Insidious attempts were also made at the same time to suborn from their allegiance sepoys of Indian regiments at home, the only result being that the plot was revealed to the Government by the soldiers themselves.

Instead of shaking British rule to its foundations the enemy had merely succeeded in proving how well and truly those foundations had been laid, and in showing the Indian unrest in its true proportions. It was only the half-educated, for the most part, who lent themselves to such sedition. In order to make the Government's task as easy as possible, the political and really educated classes suspended all political controversies concerning such problems as "colonial self-government" and other sweeping internal changes; and as for the Ruling Princes nothing, as Lord Hardinge said, could possibly exceed their loyalty. "There has not", he declared, "been one single instance of even disaffection, or even of the absence of patriotism, on the part of the Princes or Chiefs, whom I regard as the pillars of the State." As described in earlier chapters they were ready to make the greatest sacrifices for the sake of the Empire, contributing vast sums of money and large numbers of Imperial Service troops, employed both abroad and in India, and in some cases performing the services in the Dependency of British regulars.

It is impossible here even to summarize the later additions to the munificent offers and gifts already enume-

rated.[1] Some of them were mentioned by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons towards the end of 1915 as examples to illustrate the spirit which animated the whole of our Indian empire. Three hospital ships, equipped and maintained from unofficial sources, had then left the shores of India—the *Loyalty*, given jointly by a number of ruling Chiefs; the *Madras*, given by the Madras War Fund; and the *Bengali*, given by the people of Bengal. The last was most unfortunately wrecked on its way to the Persian Gulf; the first two were continuously employed in carrying sick and wounded between India and the theatres of war.

The Nizam of Hyderabad offered 60 lakhs for the expenses of one of his Imperial Service Regiments, which had gone to the front, and of the Cavalry Regiment of the Indian Army, of which he was honorary colonel. The Maharajah of Mysore, besides the 50 lakhs he had already given, offered the services of his State in many other practical ways. The Maharajah Sindhia of Gwalior, whose health alone prevented him from going to the front, made further munificent gifts in money and in kind, including a motor ambulance fleet and six armoured aeroplanes. The Begum of Bhopal, in addition to large contributions to relief funds and other services, sent 500 Korans for sick and wounded Moslem soldiers. The Gaekwar of Baroda gave 5 lakhs of rupees for the purchase of aeroplanes. The Maharajahs of Kashmir and Patiala and the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, besides other services, jointly maintained a hospital for officers in a house at Staines, which His Highness the Jam had given for the purpose.

This hospital at Staines, named, with His Majesty's consent, the Prince of Wales Hospital, had been the residence, "Jamnagar", of His Highness the Jam, better known in this country as Prince Rantjitsinhji the cricketer, who, as previously stated, had joined the Native Princes serving with the colours at the front. On the occasion of the opening ceremony he declared that he had never been so proud of

The Nizam of Hyderabad
(From a photograph by Bourne & Shepherd, India)

[1] Vol. I, pp. 106–9; Vol. IV, pp. 8–9.

The Maharajah of Mysore
(From a photograph by Vandyk)

being an Indian as that day, when the King-Emperor had allowed Indian troops to fight side by side with the British against the common foe. It was an honour, he added, to have flying over the hospital the Union flag, the common emblem of what Empire and real brotherhood meant to all of them. The Maharajah of Bikaner, one of the first of the Ruling Princes to serve with the colours at the front, added to his contributions a birthday gift to the King-Emperor of a sum in rupees equal to nearly £17,000, to be devoted as His Majesty might deem fit for the purpose of the war.

While such whole-hearted loyalty existed; while Britain and India were binding themselves together with the indissoluble bonds which are forged in the furnace of battle, the sorry conspiracy of the *Ghadr* party scarcely deserves mention save by way of contrast. When these emigrants returned with their revolutionary ideas, and a deliberate plan of reducing the Indian provinces to chaos by the murder of police and officials, they made their way up country in the early months of 1915, and, arriving in the Punjab, committed all kinds of excesses. If they expected to find the people ripe for revolt they were soon undeceived. The peasants themselves helped the authorities to track down these desperadoes, the loyal attitude of the people, as well as the fearless devotion of all ranks of the Punjab police in carrying out the measures taken under the Defence of India Act, eventually bringing the whole conspiracy to naught. In numberless

The Jam Sahib of Nawanagar (Prince Rantjitsinhji)
in his Uniform on Active Service
(From a photograph by Vandyk)

cases the peasants themselves seized and handed over the guilty parties to the authorities. The fables circulated at the time by Germany to the effect that revolution had broken out "everywhere" in India, under the leadership of a Rajah who never existed, were simply part of the colossal campaign of lies by means of which the enemy hoped to spread what he was pleased to call the Holy War against the British. It was to counteract these fictions that the India Office issued the following announcement on November 19, 1915:—

"Statements from the German press with regard to alleged disorders in India have been reproduced in certain foreign countries to the effect that revolt has broken out everywhere; that Brahmins, Buddhists, and Mohammedans have united to make all possible difficulties for the detested English; that Rajah of Bhagalpur heads the movement; that grave disorders have occurred at Bombay, Madras, Nagpur, Allahabad, and Inaspur; that in the last-named place rebels have endeavoured to stop the departure of native troops, and that British troops have had to retire and rebels have occupied barracks and arsenals. The Secretary of State for India announces that there is not a word of truth in these statements from beginning to end. It may be added that there is no such person as the Rajah of Bhagalpur. If the Nawab of Bhawalpur is referred to, he is a minor of eleven years of age."

A truer index of the real feeling throughout India was provided, only a day before this statement was published, in the Mohammedan festival of Muharram in Bombay, a celebration almost invariably marked by grave disorders whenever the Mohammedan community of India is seriously affected by unrest. On this occasion the festival was celebrated with a peacefulness which gave the complete lie to German propagandists. The loyalty of Moslem India, which the enemy confidently hoped to undermine when he dragged Turkey into the conflict as his misguided tool, was one of the great reassuring factors of the situation from the very first. Moslem India was not deceived either by this astute move on Germany's part or the seditious conspiracies which preceded it. "Turkey", declared the Moslem leader, Aga Khan, to his many millions of adherents, "has made herself a tool in Germany's hands. Not only has she ruined herself, but she has forfeited the position of trustee of Islam." Other leaders of Indian Moslem opinion issued similar manifestoes to their subjects and followers. The Nizam of Hyderabad, as the leading Mohammedan ruler in India, and head of a State whose ruler remained faithful to the British during the Mutiny of 1857–8, also struck the true hereditary note in his message, impressing upon all Mohammedans their imperative duty to remain faithful to their old and tried devotion.

"I repeat and reiterate", he wrote, "that in this crisis Mohammedan inhabitants of India, especially subjects of this State, should, if they care for their own welfare and prosperity, remain firm and wholehearted in their loyalty and obedience, and swerve not a hair's-breadth from their devotion to the British Government, whose cause I am convinced is just and right. They should keep the sacred tie which binds a subject people to their rulers, and in no case allow themselves to be beguiled

by the wiles of anyone into a course of open or secret sedition."

The Nizam of Hyderabad also displayed the most princely generosity in his contributions to the war funds. The 60 lakhs of rupees mentioned by the Colonial Secretary as the Nizam's

The Maharajah of Bikaner, in Active Service Uniform
(From a photograph by Vandyk)

gift for the expenses of his regiments on active service equalled about £400,000 in British coinage, and formed the largest individual offering made at the time to the Indian Government.

The treatment of Indian Moslem pilgrims by the Turks after their entry into the war served to strengthen the bonds of loyalty between Moslem India and the British Throne. One such pilgrim, Zakir Husain by name, whose story was published by the Bombay Government, relates how the Turks blocked all the routes homeward after the outbreak of war, and subjected the Indians to all manner of hardships and cruelty. Orders were issued by the Turkish authorities in the sacred city of Kerbela, in the Bagdad vilayet, whither Zakir Husain went on pilgrimage with his mother and sister in the summer of 1914, that the goods and women of Indians were to be regarded as the legal property of those who robbed them. Not only were their houses searched and their property seized, but dozens of them were arrested and deported to the Aleppo side, while their families were left in Kerbela.

"Throughout the next fourteen months," continued Zakir Husain, "we never got meals more than once a day. We could not get any work, and consequently we had to beg from door to door in order to get a few scraps of bread to eat, and the state of the women and children was worse even than that of the men. For a man to be an Indian was considered a sufficient reason by Turks to torture and imprison him. We protested that we were Moslems, but they never paid heed. They themselves are no Moslems, and do not act according to the precepts of Islam. According to what I heard, the Indians in Nejaf, Kazimain, and Bagdad have also been treated in the same cruel way as we were. Hundreds have been deported and their houses pillaged."

The day was not far distant, however, when the Turks were to be driven from Kerbela in the revolt of Islam which openly challenged Turkey's claim to be the guardian of the

Holy Places, and thrust her out of the sacred city of Mecca, when the Arabs of the Hejaz in the summer of 1916 proclaimed the independence of Arabia. The Aga Khan had foreseen the downfall of Turkey when he declared, after the news had been received of her alliance with Germany, that she had "lost the position of trustee of Islam, and evil will overtake her". Nothing that the Turks or their German masters could do, declared the Aga Khan, would ever weaken the loyalty of the Moslem Indians, based as it was on the consciousness that their most cherished interests, religious as well as civil, were guaranteed to them by British rule more securely than they could be by any other dominion. "All Indians knew", he concluded in the memorable speech which he delivered in London, "that if Britain was ever weakened India's aspirations, India's whole future, would go to pieces." The unswerving loyalty of His Highness Aga Sultan Sir Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., to give him his title in full, was further rewarded by the King-Emperor in the spring of 1916 by the grant of a salute of eleven guns, and the rank and status of a First-Class Chief of the Bombay Presidency for life. These were exceptional distinctions — the honour of gun salutes being regarded in India as something above and beyond all titular rewards—but they were earned by exceptional services which the Empire is not likely to forget.

It was not only from the great communities and the larger States that these expressions of devotion poured in upon the Indian Government. The notabilities and tribes of the turbulent borderland were not behind the inhabitants of British India in the spontaneity of their expressions of loyalty. Some striking examples of these were the offers of service by the Frontier Militias; the proposal of the Khyber

The Aga Khan, spiritual head of the Moslem Indians
(From a photograph by Vandyk)

tribes, who fought us in the past not once but many times, to furnish an armed contingent; and the voluntary subscription to the Relief Fund by the Wazirs of Bannu of their allowances for one month.

Beyond the border the stanch adherence of the Amir of Afghanistan to his promised policy of strict neutrality, and his determined loyalty to the British alliance, in spite of the inevitable German intrigues in his midst,

played a large part in maintaining tranquillity along the frontier as a whole. At the outbreak of the war the Amir gave the Viceroy the most solemn assurances, which he repeatedly renewed, of his intention to preserve the neutrality of his country throughout, and Lord Hardinge expressed the firmest confidence that His Majesty's promises would be faithfully performed, notwithstanding the very great pressure put upon him by certain members of his family and some prominent officials, encouraged by Germans and Turks, who went to Kabul with letters from the Kaiser in the hope of inducing the Amir to proclaim a Jehad on the North-West Frontier. While the *Emden* was pursuing her disturbing course along the coast towns of India, and piling up her long list of victims among the merchant ships; while, too, the Turks were making their first vain attempts to seize the Suez Canal and so sever Britain's main communications with India, the Turco-German agents tried to move heaven and earth to rouse these inflammable hillmen to set the torch of war alight from one end of their border to the other. Considering that Turkish troops had been employed for some years previously in drilling the Amir's army, the measure of their success was extraordinarily small.

It is true that we had to deal with a number of severe attacks from certain tribesmen just outside the border during the first year of the war, but these were all repulsed, and the tribesmen concerned severely punished. At the beginning of 1915 the fort of Spina Khaisora in the Tochi Valley was attacked by a strong force of the turbulent Khostwal tribe, who were promptly repelled by the Bannu Movable Column and a portion of the North Wazaristan Militia, operating under the command of Major-General H. O'Donnell, C.B., D.S.O. Of the British troops only the North Wazaristan Militia actually engaged the enemy, but the operations were very successful, the enemy losing some fifty or sixty killed and being driven in confusion over the frontier. The North Wazaristan Militia won special mention in Major-General O'Donnell's dispatch for their dash and spirit in the action against heavy odds and after a long march. It was in this affair that Captain Eustace Jotham, of the 51st Sikhs, lost his life in an act of signal valour which was afterwards recognized by the award of the Victoria Cross. Captain Jotham, who was commanding a party of about a dozen of the North Wazaristan Militia, was attacked in a nullah and almost surrounded by an overwhelming force of some 1500 tribesmen. Under orders to run for it with his party he gave the command to retire and could himself have escaped, but most gallantly sacrificed his life in stopping to help a dismounted sowar who had lost his horse, and trying to carry him into safety. Both were killed.

Major G. B. Scott, commanding the North Wazaristan Militia, was mentioned in dispatches for his sound and bold leading at a critical time in this engagement, when suddenly faced with a desperate position against great odds. "The officer's clear military instinct and perception of the situation", wrote

Major-General O'Donnell, "saved the day." Lieutenant N. H. Prendergast, who also distinguished himself, was given command of the flank attack after escaping in a most marvellous manner from a practically hopeless situation, and carried out his independent command with conspicuous coolness and ability. "A fine young officer", notes the Major-General, in his reference to this incident. Various Indian ranks of the North Wazaristan Militia were recommended for gallantry and good work on the same occasion, including Subadar Major Tor Khan, Sardar Bahadur, I.O.M., whose powerful influence with his corps proved an invaluable asset, and "whose bravery and energy", we are told, "are a by-word with all".

The Tochi Valley was the scene of another incursion in the following March, when a considerable force of Zadrans, estimated at 7000 to 8000 men, invaded British territory from Khost. To meet this new danger the Bannu Movable Column, together with a portion of the North Wazaristan Militia, the whole under the command of Brigadier-General V.B. Fane, C.B., moved out from Miramshah on March 26, when the tribesmen were threatening that place. The attack was entirely successful, the enemy losing some 500 in killed or wounded, and retiring in disorder across the border. "Our success", says the dispatch, "was largely due to the skilful manner in which a column under Major G. B. Scott, Commandant, North Wazaristan Militia, by means of a night march gained a position in rear of the enemy by the time the British frontal attack commenced." This frontal attack, commanded with great skill by Lieutenant-Colonel H. E. Lewis, was securely protected on the right flank by Lieutenant-Colonel G. M. Baldwin, D.S.O., of the Frontier Force Cavalry, whose good leading and dispositions were also commended.

Similar affairs occurred among several other unruly tribes along this always inflammable borderland, only to receive equally prompt and drastic punishment. Later in the spring of 1915, for example, a Mohmand lashkar, estimated to number some 4000 men, invaded British territory near Shabkadr, when they were attacked by the Khyber Movable Column and quickly dispersed across the border. For the most part, however, the outbreak of the Great War failed to arouse the excitement on the North-West Frontier that Germany had confidently expected. To a certain extent this was accounted for by Colonel Sir George Roos-Keppel, Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, on the ground of the difficulty of comprehending the vast issues of such a distant conflict.

"So much was understood, however," he wrote in his annual report for 1915, "that Britain was engaged in a great struggle, and the cis-border population had no hesitation in giving their verdict on the issue before them regarding the maintenance of British supremacy. Promises of service and expressions of loyalty were evoked on all sides, and were repeated, it may be noted, on the anniversary of the declaration of war on August 4, 1915. The enthusiasm spread in some degree even to the tribal tracts administered by Government, and

the offers of service by the militias and the proposal of the Khyber tribes to furnish an armed contingent may be cited in this connection."

"The outbreak of war with the Porte", added Sir George Roos-Keppel, "only served to call forth fresh expressions of allegiance to the British Government, and of condemnation of the bellicose folly of Turkey." Against the isolated outbreaks already referred to could be set an overwhelming list of acts and offers of unforgettable loyalty. The Prime Minister of the independent Gurkha State of Nepal, in the Himalayas, largely added to the munificent gifts and offers made at the beginning of the war, including the army under his control, and rendered His Majesty's Government, as Mr. Chamberlain bore witness, most valuable services by the military facilities which he afforded. The Maharajah of Bhutan, a country bounded on its northern borders by the once hostile, and now most friendly, land of Tibet, contributed a lakh of rupees to the Relief Fund, besides offering the financial and military resources of his State. Tibet itself not only remained on the best of terms but gave repeated and unmistakable demonstrations of her sympathy and support. The Dalai Lama, as stated in an earlier chapter, offered 1000 soldiers at the outbreak of war. Later, when news arrived on the roof of the world of General Botha's conquest of South-West Africa, he ordered flags to be hoisted on the hills round Lhasa, and special prayers to be offered for Britain's further victories.

When, therefore, Lord Hardinge came to take his farewell as Viceroy, in March, 1916, he had reason to speak with pride and appreciation of the deep-seated patriotism and whole-hearted devotion of the people of India, "which would ever shine as a beacon, and illumine the history of the land". Most of the frontier troubles had subsided by the winter of 1915–16, which proved the quietest of the five past years, and, save for certain Mahsud raiders, who would presently receive due punishment, perfect tranquillity then prevailed on the border. The truth was that any invasion of India from the North-West was now a far more difficult matter than it had ever been. The most vulnerable points were strongly defended, and high explosives, aircraft, and other developments of modern warfare had vastly improved the defensive works which had been in progress, more or less, for over a century. By the summer of 1916 the British regiments which had been sent from India to fight in the chief theatres of war had been replaced, and fresh supplies had made India, in guns and ammunition, stronger than ever. Internally, save for a regrettable number of murders and dacoities in Bengal, the situation, said Lord Hardinge, in his farewell speech on March 25, 1916, could hardly be more favourable. The Government, he added, had ample evidence of the ceaseless designs of Germany to create trouble, based on the fallacy that India would betray the Empire. In his later statement to the correspondent of the *New York Times*, the ex-Viceroy added that one of these plots—directly in-

stigated by Germany through various agents, freely supplied with funds for the purpose—was nothing less than a general revolt, which was timed to break out on Christmas Day, 1915. The centre of this conspiracy was in Bengal, where there had always been a certain amount of anarchist activity.

Fortunately the Government was warned in time, and, with full information of the projected rising, was able to render all preparations abortive. Instead of this rebellion the year closed with the great Indian National Congress at Bombay, at which Sir Satyendra Sinha, in his presidential address, voiced the unswerving fealty and whole-hearted homage of the congress to their beloved Sovereign. In referring to the war he declared that the uppermost feeling in their minds was deep admiration for the self-imposed burden which Britain was bearing in the struggle for liberty and freedom, and profound pride that India had not fallen behind the other portions of the Empire.

The magnificent part played by India's troops during this historic period in all parts of the world will be found recorded elsewhere. In the limited space of the chapters on the many campaigns in which they figured, however, it has often been impossible to do full justice to their work, or adequately estimate the value of their services. Having an army ready, India was ahead of all the component parts of the Empire in fighting by the side of the Mother Country on the battle-fields of France, the first time in all history that Briton and Indian had fought together in Europe. The first contingent arrived in the very nick of time, when the hard-pressed British Army, after flinging its front across Flanders to prevent its flank from being turned, was stopping the first German bid for the Channel ports through Ypres, and needing all the help it could get. For full twelve

Lord Chelmsford, who succeeded Lord Hardinge as Viceroy of India
(From a photograph by Martin Jacolette)

months after gallantly supporting the Second Corps in those days of stress in October, 1914, the Indian Army Corps, in ever-increasing numbers, played its part in the Western campaign with a courage and endurance, often against great odds, and in new and trying conditions, which "worthily upheld the honour of the Empire", to quote from the King-Emperor's farewell message in the autumn of 1915,[1]

[1] Vol. IV, p. 329.

INDIA
AND THE CAMPAIGNS
OF
THE MIDDLE EAST
English Miles
0 100 200 300 400 500 600
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
ASIATIC TURKEY
ASIA MINOR
MESOPOTAMIA
PERSIA
AFGHANISTAN
TURKESTAN
EASTERN TURKESTAN
TIBET
Takla Makan
Tarim Basin
Kwen Lun Mountains
Tash Kan Shan
Kara Hum
Kizil Kum
Great Salt Desert
Syrian Desert
Nefud Desert
Dasht-i-Lut Desert
Thar Desert
Sandy Desert of Roba Chaly
Gt Arabian Desert
ARABIA
RED SEA
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
INDIA
BRITISH INDIA
NATIVE STATES
UNITED PROVINCES
CENTRAL PROVINCES
RAJPUTANA
BALUCHISTAN
MAKRAN
KASHMIR
PUNJAB
SIND
DELHI
NEPAL
BHUTAN
SIKKIM
ASSAM
BURMA
MYSORE
HYDRABAD
CEYLON
Laccadive Islands
Andaman Is
North Andaman
South Andaman
ABYSSINIA
BRITISH SOMALILAND
Gulf of Aden
Gulf of Oman
Persian Gulf
Aden to Bombay 1660
Aden to Karachi 1475 m
Suez to Bombay 6090 m
Southampton to Bombay 6090 m
Colombo to Calcutta 1235 m
Colombo to Rangoon 1240 m
Bombay to Singapore 3455 m
Constantinople
Astrakhan
Tiflis
Baku
Tabriz
Aleppo
Damascus
Beirut
Jerusalem
Cairo
Suez
Alexandria
Baghdad
Basra
Teheran
Isphahan
Meshed
Herat
Kabul
Kandahar
Quetta
Karachi
Muscat
Aden
Mecca
Medina
Jeddah
Hodeida
Mocha
Socotra
Bombay
Poona
Surat
Baroda
Ahmadabad
Indore
Calcutta
Madras
Pondicherry
Trichinopoly
Colombo
Galle
Lhasa
Yarkand
Kashgar
Tashkend
Samarkand
Bokhara
Khiva
Merv
Askabad
Kazalinsk
Aralsk
Orenburg
Perovsk
Semipalatinsk
Vernoe
Kuldja
Ili R.
Balkash L.
Barkul
Urumchi
Turfan Oasis
Hami
Aksu
Kashgar
Yarkand
Khotan
Tengri Nor
Lob Nor
Tsaidam Swamp
Kuku Nor
Sining
Hwang ho
Yangtsi Kiang
Brahmaputra R.
Indus R.
Ganges R.
Jumna R.
Sutlej R.
Punjab
Lahore
Amritsar
Delhi
Agra
Allahabad
Benares
Cawnpore
Lucknow
Calcutta
Mouths of the Ganges
Darjeeling
Khasi Hills
Shillong
Mandalay
Irrawaddy R.
Sittang R.
Rangoon
Chittagong
Sandoways
Nagpur
Jubbulpore
Mahanadi R.
Godavari R.
Kistna R.
Nerbudda R.
Tapti R.
Cutch
Kathiawar
Gulf of Cambay
Gulf of Cutch
Malabar Coast
Coromandel Coast
Western Ghats
Eastern Ghats
Vindhya Ra.
Nilgiri Hills
Palk Strait
Gulf of Manar
Nine Degree Chan
Minicoy I.
Laccadive Islands
Maldive Islands
Cape Comorin
Trivandrum
Cochin
Calicut
Mangalore
Bangalore
Mysore
Hyderabad
Masulipatam
Nellore
Madras
Karikal
Tranquebar
Negrais C.
Akyab
Chittagong
Sandoways
Mouths of the Ganges
Darjeeling
Khasi Hills
Shillong
Mandalay
Irrawaddy R.
Sittang R.
Rangoon
Andaman Is
North Andaman
South Andaman

"and the great traditions of my army in India". When the Indians departed from the European front for other fields of action—in Mesopotamia and elsewhere—they left with a just pride "in deeds nobly done in days of ever-memorable conflict", and an experience of modern warfare which stood them in good stead in their new campaigns.

Meantime, in Gallipoli the Indians had established with the Australians and New Zealanders that fellowship in battle and the common hardships of campaigning which, since the days of Clive, had promoted ties of good comradeship with British troops. Here, and elsewhere, they had done more for Imperial unity in a few months of war than could have been accomplished in many years of peace.

Those who fell in Gallipoli did not die in vain, for, as the King said in a message to Australia and New Zealand which applied with equal force to India, "their sacrifice has drawn our peoples more closely together, and added strength and glory to the Empire". The "Anzacs" who returned had nothing but praise for their Indian comrades-in-arms in that campaign. One Australian soldier's testimony, in a letter to the Secretary of State for India, praising the 14th Mountain Battery for its gallant support of the 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade at Gaba Tepe, in the small hours of April 25, 1915, was typical of many such tributes:—

"All Australians", he wrote, "were fascinated by the cool work done by the battery which aided us so much, and stirred us to feeling which words cannot convey by the loyal help they gave us when we were in need of it. There was a fine exhibition of true Empire spirit around the camp fire; we would collect sticks for a fire, and they would make chupatee (?) cakes, and I can tell you that in that valley of death those cakes with jam between them went well. I wish you to know that wherever we meet those grand and game soldiers of India, Australians will extend an open hand of binding friendship."

Thus were broken down old invisible barriers of prejudice, and a deeper sympathy won for India's hopes and aspirations both at home and in regard to the Imperial changes which would inevitably follow the war. In Mesopotamia our Indian troops played a predominant part in the campaign, the whole expedition being under the control of the Indian Government from its first brilliant series of victories up the Tigris and Euphrates to the tragedy of Kut, after which the responsibility was taken over by the Imperial Government. The full story of that hapless adventure had yet to be told when Lord Hardinge's term of office expired, but this much at least was known, that the Indian troops, like their British comrades, had played a manful part throughout one of the most arduous campaigns in the whole World War. The break-down in the medical supplies which added to the hardships of that expedition in the second half of 1915, and the prime responsibility for the strategy which led to disaster at Kut, are matters which must be left for discussion elsewhere. Mistakes, however, were inevitable where, as in the Mother Country, the military task proved so

incomparably greater than anything that had been even imagined before. Previously the largest expedition that had ever left India's shores had been composed of no more than 18,000 men; but since the outbreak of war in August, 1914, until Lord Hardinge's departure in the spring of 1916, India had sent over the seas no fewer than 300,000 soldiers.

Lord Hardinge, after receiving the Garter for his distinguished services as a just and sympathetic ruler through a term of office beset by unparalleled difficulties, was succeeded by the 3rd Lord Chelmsford, who brought to his task considerable experience as a proconsul. Shortly after succeeding to his title he was appointed, in 1905, Governor of Queensland, and held that office until 1909, when he followed Sir Harry Rawson as Governor of New South Wales. Lord Chelmsford went to Australia with a reputation as a cricketer—having, as Mr. J. F. N. Thesiger, captained the Oxford eleven—which gave him a ready welcome in the Commonwealth; and he succeeded Lord Hardinge as Viceroy with a knowledge of existing conditions in India which made him equally acceptable in the Dependency. A captain in the 4th Dorsetshire Regiment, he had been serving in India since the early stages of the war, travelling extensively in Upper India during the winter of 1915–16, and staying for a time at Government House, Delhi, as a guest of Lord Hardinge.

India's Care of her Wounded Soldiers: a ward of the Lady Hardinge Hospital at Bombay

Unhappily the collapse of the medical arrangements in Mesopotamia in

1915 was one of the ugliest features of the ill-fated campaign which led to the fall of General Townshend at Kut, and the care of India's wounded, once they returned home, was not above criticism. But at the Lady Hardinge War Hospital in Bombay, which, with its spacious, mosque-like dome, formed one of the most striking of all the fine buildings in that city, the whole organization was on a scale worthy of the Empire. Its ward arrangements may be judged from the interior view printed on p. 202. The picture overleaf relates to the care of the Indian wounded at Brighton while the Indian Expeditionary Force was fighting in France and Flanders. When it suddenly became necessary in the course of that campaign to relinquish the plans which had been formed for removing the Indian wounded from the front to Marseilles and Egypt, the authorities were confronted with a difficult problem. It was no easy matter suddenly to meet all the needs of a hospital in which fighting men from all parts of India could be accommodated and treated in strict accordance with their varying castes and creeds. The emergency was met by Lord Kitchener by the appointment as Commissioner of Indian Hospitals of Sir Walter Roper Lawrence, whose distinguished Indian services had been rewarded in 1906 with a baronetcy and the G.C.I.E. Sir Walter at once organized arrangements for the reception of the Indian wounded both in France and this country, the necessary hospitals, including those at Brighton, where the majority of the wounded were brought, being created and fully equipped in a marvellously short space of time.

"Dr. Brighton" fully lived up to his enviable reputation as a health-giving host. From December, 1914, to November, 1915, over 2000 patients passed through the wards of the Indian Military Hospital established in the Royal Pavilion—the fantastic palace built by George IV, the Oriental design of which helped to make the Indians feel at home—and of these only 12 died. The whole of the royal and other buildings lent by the town authorities were adapted and transformed for the purpose, and everything that science could suggest was furnished to make the hospitals complete. Here, as elsewhere, the Indian wounded were visited more than once by the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress. On the second occasion His Majesty decorated a number of the wounded Indian officers for conspicuous gallantry in the field, also presenting the Victoria Cross won at Ypres by Jemadar Mir Dast, of Coke's Rifles, as already recorded, in the attack on the 26th of April, 1915. Jemadar Mir Dast, though recovered from his wounds, was still suffering from the effects of poison gas, and had to be wheeled up for the Royal investiture. He insisted on standing up, however, in front of the King-Emperor. Before awarding the Cross His Majesty addressed him as follows:—

"It is nearly sixty years since Queen Victoria instituted this Cross for conspicuous bravery in battle. At the Delhi Durbar, in 1911, I ordered that my Indian soldiers should be admitted to this high

Britain's Care of her Indian Wounded: the dome of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, converted into a military hospital

and coveted distinction. I have already bestowed with my own hand two V.C.'s on Indian soldiers, and I give this third Cross with infinite pleasure. I earnestly hope that you will soon completely recover from your injuries, and that you will live long to enjoy your honours."

Then came the presentation of a Military Cross and other decorations to various Indian officers, after which Their Majesties visited the wards in order to see those of the wounded who were not well enough to attend the investiture in the grounds; passing thence to the different kitchens attached to the hospital, including one for the Mohammedans, another for the meat-eating Hindus, a third for those prohibited from eating anything involving the taking of life; and so on. Proper caste cooks, with a head cook in charge, were attached to each kitchen. Their Majesties were left in little doubt that everything possible was being done to meet both the spiritual and material needs of all the different races and religions represented there. On the way to the kitchen they could hear the Sikhs chanting the evening prayers in their improvised temple, on which occasions special petitions were always offered for the King-Emperor's victory. Separate parts of the grounds had also been reserved for the religious observances of other Indian sects. Queen Alexandra and other members of the Royal Family, as well as Lord Kitchener and Mr. Chamberlain, as Secretary of State for India, were among many other illustrious visitors to these warriors, who had so nobly

responded to the King-Emperor's call "to uphold the Izzat of the British Raj against an aggressive and relentless enemy".

In the many theatres of war the Indian soldiers had earned a full share of honours. The total number of decorations which they had won down to the month of June, 1916, was over 1300. These included the Victoria Cross, which had been won in seven cases; the Military Cross, in twenty-six cases; the Indian Order of Merit of the First Class, in six cases; and the Indian Order of Merit of the Second Class, in 416 cases.

It was part of the German plot to drag Persia into the conflict, as well as Afghanistan, and so extend the war until it set the whole North-Western Frontier aflame. In Afghanistan, as we have seen, the strength and loyalty of the Amir brought these schemes to nought, but they were more effective in Persia, where the young Shah and his weak government were heavily handicapped by internal troubles, and where German gold had long been preparing the way among discontented gendarmerie and rapacious tribesmen. The situation became extremely grave in the latter part of 1915, when our tragic failure to advance first on Constantinople and then on Bagdad gave the enemy the opportunity for which he had waited since the beginning of the war. He had not waited in idleness. Long before the retreats from Gallipoli and Ctesiphon he had left no stone unturned to force Persia into the conflict on the side of the Central Powers and against the Entente. Here, as elsewhere in the East, his propaganda had been of the Holy War order, involving an appeal to the most fanatical elements in Persia. In this appeal, as the Marquess of Crewe observed in the House of Lords, we were bound to take second place.

> "Our treatment of Islam has been one of giving absolutely free and fair play to the exercise of their faith, but we have never attempted to pretend adhesion. But in the case of this propaganda there has been a free use of pretended conversion to the faith of Islam. Our appeal has been made—it always has been made—to the rational elements of the Moslem world; these appeals are made to the most ignorant and bigoted members of it."

Even in normal times the new Constitutional Government of Persia had found it no easy matter to preserve order. Hence the creation of the Swedish gendarmerie, in succession to the similar force of Persians armed and dressed as Cossacks, and officered by a certain proportion of Russian officers. The new gendarmerie was Swedish only in its name and officers, the rank and file, as with their predecessors, being Persian. When it was formed it was necessary that it should be officered by men from a country which was neutral in the sense of not being specially concerned in Persian affairs, or suspected of any ambitions of becoming so. It was for that reason that Swedish officers were chosen; and these, it is only fair to add, when they betrayed their trust and rebelled against their Persian employers, were disowned by their own Government, which endeavoured to prevent them from engaging in any unneutral manner. It is also right to

explain that most of the officers originally nominated for the force by the Swedish Government had returned when the troubles began, their Swedish successors throwing in their lot with the Germans and their money-bags as discredited adventurers.

In the meanwhile an elaborate plot had been in progress to force Persia into the war under the leadership of Prince Henry of Reuss, the German Minister in Teheran—formerly German Consul-General at Calcutta—with the help of bribery on a most lavish scale, and a campaign of assassination at the hands of a formidable body of desperadoes, largely composed of Germans and Austrians. Some of these miscreants, according to Lord Crewe, were presumably German officers, "perhaps more German riff-raff, assisted by a number of Turks, and forming an obvious nucleus for the bodies of brigands and outlaws who are only too numerous in Persia". Besides the hired bravoes who had penetrated into Persia for the purpose were a number of prisoners who had been taken by the Russians and had escaped after being interned at various places in the Caucasus.

Impressing the Persians: the first (Russian) armoured car seen in Teheran

Standing next to the car on the right is the Russian colonel of the Persian Cossacks, with his wife and the Belgian Minister.

The influence of these conspirators made itself felt in the summer of 1915 in the vicinity of Bushire, on the Persian Gulf, where the presence of hostile tribesmen was reported to the British Residency on July 12. In order to verify the report Major Oliphant, 96th Regiment, and Captain Ranking, Assistant Political Officer,

went out to reconnoitre with a mixed patrol of infantry and sowars. While returning, the patrol was ambushed, and both officers were killed, the tribesmen concerned in the outrage, who also killed or wounded three others of the party, afterwards disappearing into the interior.

This unprovoked attack was the work of the Tangistani tribesmen, infesting the coastal region of Bushire, and since the Persian Government failed to make reparation for their action the British Government ordered that both the port and town of Bushire —the land terminus of the Indo-European telegraph line and a chief station of the British Indian Steamship Company—should be seized and occupied until the British demands had been complied with. On August 8, 1915, therefore, Bushire was taken over by a British force without opposition. Further, as a punishment to the tribesmen implicated in the hostile assault of July 12, orders were issued for a naval and military force to attack the fortified village of Dilwar, the head-quarters of the lawless Tangistanis. The result, as testified by Sir John Nixon in his dispatch relative to these operations, afforded "an excellent example of co-operation between the two Services, and it was very creditably carried out by all concerned".

Commanded by Captain D. St. A. Wake, R.N., the naval squadron arrived off Dilwar on August 10, but owing to unfavourable weather conditions landing operations had to be postponed until the 13th. Naval guns on that day assisted the operations by some first-rate practice, which drove inland the hostile tribesmen opposing the landing of the little expeditionary force. This consisted of troops and a naval landing-party, under the command of Major C. E. H. Wintle, and engaged the enemy in several actions during the two following days. In spite of stiff opposition and intense heat the fort and village of Dilwar

Prince Henry of Reuss, Prime Mover in the German Plots in Teheran

were destroyed, and heavy losses inflicted on the Tangistanis both by rifle and machine-gun fire, as well as by shell fire from the ships. Having successfully accomplished its task the force was re-embarked, without interference by the enemy, on the night of August 15–16.

In the meantime the British garrison at Bushire maintained its outpost line for the protection of the northern part of the island from attack from the

mainland. The low-lying sandy tract which joins the "island" to the mainland is known as the "Mashileh" and is about seven miles across, the same distance dividing the sea which flanks the Mashileh on the north and south. It is liable to inundation during high tides. Along the edge of Bushire Island, overlooking the Mashileh, extends a line of cliffs, much intersected by nullahs and broken ground. The eastern section of the British outposts lay along the line of the cliffs, while the southern section extended across the island to the sea on the west side. Close and incessant watch had to be kept all along the outpost line, for Tangistani raiding-parties frequently crossed the Mashileh at night and attempted to break through.

Early in September word reached the British head-quarters that plans were being made for an enemy attack in force. The plan developed at daybreak on September 9, when a patrol from the outposts located a body of Tangistani mustering in the nullahs at the edge of the Mashileh—a favourite spot for the gathering of many forces on such occasions.

"On receiving this report," writes Sir John Nixon, in his dispatch dated January 15, 1916, but not published until towards the end of the following July, "Brigadier-General H. T. Brooking, C.B., commanding the British garrison, immediately made dispositions to attack the enemy in front and to turn their left flank, and for the cavalry to move out on the Mashileh on their line of retreat. After several hours' fighting, the turning attack, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Lane, 96th Berar Infantry, charged with the bayonet. The enemy, some 600 strong, broke and fled across the Mashileh. The cavalry then charged them in the open, and our guns shelled them across the Mashileh until they were out of range. Throughout the period of his command at Bushire, General Brooking dealt with an awkward situation in a most capable manner. On the occasion of the action of September 9, thanks to his energetic and skilful command, the Tangistanis were defeated and lost heavily before they had time to deliver a serious attack. In this action the bravery and endurance of the troops in most trying heat, which claimed several victims, was most commendable. A landing-party of the Royal Navy afforded valuable assistance. The charge by a squadron of the 16th Cavalry, led by Major W. H. Pennington, 12th Cavalry, in which both British officers and half of the Indian officers lost their lives, was a most gallant affair."

The other British officer to fall in this fine charge of the 16th Cavalry was Second-Lieutenant L. I. L. Thornton, attached from the I.A.R.O., who, with Major Pennington, had also been mentioned for good work in the earlier operations at Bushire. The Indian officers of the 16th Cavalry killed on the same occasion were Rissaldar Prem Singh and Jemadar Gopal Singh. Other units mentioned for their services in these operations were the 96th Berar Infantry, who distinguished themselves throughout; the 11th Rajputs, and the 23rd Peshawar Mountain Battery.

The Bushire force, however, was powerless to affect the general situation in Persia, which gradually grew from bad to worse in the summer of 1915. The most ominous development was a series of deliberate murders in various parts of the country. The Russian bank-manager was killed

at Ispahan, where, later, the British Consul was attacked and the Indian orderly killed. At Shiraz, in Southern Persia, the British Consul-General was wounded and the Vice-Consul assassinated. That was on September 2, 1915, and although the Persian Government at once tendered a formal apology the situation was obviously becoming intolerable. Russian troops accordingly began to make their presence felt in Northern Persia, where a certain number of them had long been stationed in order to secure the maintenance of Russian interests.

Useful Units in many Theatres of War: an Indian mountain battery

Another outrageous incident had occurred at Kangavar on August 25, when the British and Russian Consuls at Kermanshah were returning to their posts from Hamadan. The German Consul from Kermanshah had arrived with a force consisting of perhaps 200 men, and, having occupied the surrounding hills, had informed the Governor that he would give three hours for the British and Russian Consuls to leave. Failing this, he would attack the town. The Consuls were obliged to return to Hamadan, whereupon the German and his forces left. The object of this attack, as the British Foreign Office pointed out at the time, was obviously to keep the Consular representatives of the Entente Powers out of Kermanshah—the main means of entrance for German agents on the Turco-Persian front, and on the road along which the greater part of the conspirators' war material was smuggled from the Turkish border.

The British force was not yet strong enough seriously to grapple with the lawlessness in the south, though the two services did their best to punish the raiding tribes along the Persian Gulf. These robber hordes badly needed chastening. Tribesmen who, in normal times, broke the monotony of life by piracy and gun-running, they were now well paid by German agents, and armed with modern rifles. Our Navy and the limited number of British troops available did wonders in the way of keeping the rebels in check along the coast, but they could not work miracles inland, where the whole country was in a state of unrest. Increasing in boldness one rebel chief, Bahram Khan of Baranzai, invaded British Baluchistan—300 miles from the frontier of India—at the end of September, 1915, at the head of a

strong force of local tribesmen, encouraged by the German Consul at Kerman, but was beaten back by the Khan of Kelat, with the assistance of the Mekran Levy Corps. No British troops were engaged.

These and other developments brought the crisis to a head in November with the open revolt of the

of treating them as hostages and putting pressure on the British Government. The prisoners appear to have been well treated, but needless to say the capture of a prominent British representative in this manner was not lightly to be dismissed, especially in view of the riotous condition of affairs in other parts of the country.

Persia and the Great War: map illustrating the German attempts to carry the conflict to India by way of the Middle East

Persian gendarmerie, who, as they were not receiving their pay from their own Government, fell easy victims to German gold. Their Swedish officers, for the most part, appear to have sold their services as mere mercenaries. The first scene of the new act in this Persian melodrama took place on November 10 at Shiraz, where Major O'Connell, the British Consul, and some representatives of the British colony were seized and carried off to Borasjam, half-way to Bushire, with the presumed intention

The irony of it was that the rebellious gendarmerie had been largely trained and equipped at the joint cost of Britain and Russia, out of loans and advances made for that purpose in the hope of securing the safety of the southern trade routes. To both Allies, who, by their Convention of 1907, had engaged to respect the integrity and independence of the country, it was now clear that Persia's position as a neutral State was being seriously undermined. A new Government was accordingly formed at

Teheran, containing some stronger elements; and one of those Russian counter-strokes were delivered which furnished some of the most dramatic surprises of the Great World War. A Russian advance began from Kasvin, and by a series of swift successes changed the whole situation. The Russian Legation in Teheran issued a manifesto to the Persian people pointing out that since the measures hitherto taken against the corrupting gold of Germany and the propaganda of the Turco-German agents who were seeking to drag Persia into the war had failed to have the desired effect, Russia, in agreement with the Government of the Shah, had decided to put an end to these activities. The Russian arms would not be turned against the Persians, but would be used solely in the defence of the peaceful population, and payment would be made for everything taken.

Lord Robert Cecil explained in the House of Commons at the time that this Russian column was advancing towards Teheran as the sole means of affording protection to the British and Allied Legations and subjects there, and the Persian Government had been expressly informed of the pacific intentions of these troops. The only desire of the British Government, he added, was to maintain friendly relations with Persia, provided that her Government made genuine efforts to prevent the attempts of our enemies against the Allies' officials in that country. The Persian Government, however, had been given quite clearly to understand that if it concluded any special agreement with Germany and Turkey the Anglo-Russian undertaking to maintain the integrity and independence of Persia would lapse. Although this warning, said Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons on November 11, had been given by Russia alone, the British and Russian Governments were acting in complete unity in Persia. "It must be obvious", he added, "that the Persian Government cannot make agreements with our enemies, who have instigated murderous attacks on our Consuls and their staffs, without risking the position of Persia." It was an unenviable position for the unfortunate Shah; and there was a good deal to be said for the plea of the Persian Government that ever since the outbreak of war its whole time and attention had been devoted towards finding means by which its neutrality could be respected in every sense of the word. No one conversant with the military, political, and financial condition of the country throughout that period was surprised that Persia found her task impossible against the Machiavellian plots of Germany. These conspiracies were to a certain extent supported by some few of what are called the advanced school in Persia: men who had been seduced into thinking that the Nationalist Party in Persia would be favoured by the Kaiser, just as Nationalists of India and Ireland had been promised everything they ever hoped for if only they would join forces with benevolent Germany. That belief, however, did not apparently go very deep or sink very far; which was, perhaps, not altogether surprising, for, as Lord

Crewe said, it was almost too bad a joke, or too good a joke, to associate German domination in a country like Persia with the idea of freedom or extended rights. Knowing, therefore, that it could not stand alone, it was time to make the Persian Government decide that a more hopeful future awaited it through the support of Great Britain and Russia rather than through that of Germany and Turkey. Hence the Russian advance from Kasvin under General Baratoff in November, 1915, with full assurances that it was designed, like the arrival of British troops in Bushire, as a continued effort to secure the maintenance of Persian independence.

As soon as he heard of the Russian advance, Prince Henry of Reuss, after planning a *coup* which he fondly hoped would deliver the young ruler into his power, fled from his Legation at Teheran on the night of November 14, 1915, for Shah Abdul Azim, a short distance from the capital, accompanied by the Turkish and Austrian diplomatists, and followed by the gendarmerie—ostensibly on a Government mission. Arrived at Shah Abdul Azim, the plotters confidently awaited the arrival of the Sovereign, for whose reception the gendarmerie were now drawn up in review order, the Foreign Ministers, with their staffs, attending in full dress. Unfortunately for their plans, which included a concentration of the Persian, German, and Turkish forces under the Shah at the former capital of Ispahan, and an advance thence against the Russians and British, the plot at Teheran miscarried. It seems that on the night of the German flight the Colonel of the Persian Cossack Brigade, which had remained faithful to its allegiance, had arranged to hold an "At Home", and the infamous plan of the Germans was to bribe one of the Swedish officers, attending as the Colonel's guest, to assassinate him in the midst of the reception. This, it was hoped, would throw the whole brigade into such confusion as to make the rest of the plot easy. Happily the would-be assassin, armed with bombs, was discovered in time, and the loyalty of the Persian Cossacks remained intact. The Shah's position, however, remained trying enough for a young sovereign—he was only seventeen—called to occupy a throne through a crisis which would have proved a time of exceptional stress and danger for an older and stronger ruler. On the following morning Teheran was full of excitement over the news that the Shah was, indeed, about to leave the capital. It seemed as though the German plot had succeeded after all. Within the Palace, according to Reuter's graphic account, the most dramatic scenes were in progress. The unfortunate Shah, unable to make up his mind, sat bewildered in a corner of the room, surrounded on one side by the functionaries who were doing their utmost to induce him to go, and on the other by Samsan-es-Sultaneh, the Sipahdar —presently to receive the higher title of Sipah Salar, or Prime Minister—and Prince Firman Firma, urging him no less earnestly to stay:

"Utterly distracted, the boy-ruler sent four times for Colonel Westdahl, asking

him what he advised, but the Chief of Police correctly replied on each occasion that he was there to obey orders, and not to advise —a striking contrast to the behaviour of the Chief of the Gendarmerie, Colonel Edwall. The Ministers, when appealed to by the Shah, did not know what to say, as they had become completely overawed by the German party. This state of hesita-

The Young Shah of Persia

tion lasted all the morning, and in the afternoon the British and Russian Ministers had a private conference with the Shah, at which it was explained at great length to the young boy that the presence of the Russian troops near Teheran was not a menace but a safeguard to the public safety, and that the policy of the two Powers was one of friendliness towards Persia."

This, apparently, clinched matters, His Majesty then openly declaring himself the friend of Great Britain and Russia, and also confirming the evidence that the Germans had made the greatest efforts to drag his country into the war against the Allies. The Shah's decision to remain in his capital was a fatal blow to Prince Reuss's immediate hopes. The rumours spread abroad of a forthcoming march of the Turks and Germans on India, by way of Bagdad and Persia, were now discounted by the concrete fact of the vigorous Russian advance against Hamadan, where the Turco-German conspirators were concentrated. The strength of the rebels was uncertain, but they were known to be well supplied with war material from the Turkish frontier. Lord Robert Cecil estimated their numbers towards the middle of December, 1915, at 8000 irregulars and 3000 revolted gendarmes, with an adequate supply of rifles and machine-guns. Whatever their strength, they did not venture to measure it against the might of the oncoming Russians, who, after clearing the district near Ava, and seizing the Sultan Bulak Pass, which lies on the direct route from Kasvin, occupied Hamadan without opposition on December 15. The rebels and their Turco-German paymasters fell back towards the Kurdish town of Kermanshah, on the main caravan route from Bagdad to the Persian capital, and the enemy's base of operations on the Turco-Persian front.

Here Prince Henry of Reuss, having the bulk of the Shah's armed forces still in his power, and being within easy reach of reinforcements and supplies across the Turkish fron-

tier, by no means abandoned hope of capturing the Shah and setting the whole country ablaze. From the holy city of Kum, another centre of his intrigues against Great Britain and Russia, south of Teheran, and 70 miles south-east of Hamadan, every effort was made to continue the agitation, and placards were posted calling on the Faithful to attack all Russians and British in the name of the Holy War. The capital was also flooded with inspired telegrams and petitions from hirelings threatening dethronement and all manner of disturbances if the Shah persisted in refusing to throw in his lot with the rebels. It was not long, however, before Kum followed the fate of Hamadan, the Russians occupying the city on December 21, 1915, taking every precaution in doing so, however, to respect the religious associations of this centre of pilgrimage. The troops did not enter until the Persian authorities had consulted with the Mahommedan clergy and arranged which quarters should be allotted for the Russian occupation. Kashan, 80 miles farther south, fell into Russian hands a few days later. General Baratoff, commanding the expeditionary force, had meantime been received at Teheran by the Shah, after the assurance that the troops would not enter the capital unless obliged to do so in order to protect Allied life and property.

Foiled in their plot to carry the Shah and his Government with them, the Germans continued the revolutionary movement in the Kermanshah district, recovering not a little of their prestige by the British evacuation of Gallipoli at the end of 1915 and beginning of 1916, as well as by the success of the Turks in surrounding Kut-el-Amara. One sequel to these set-backs was the announcement that Turkey, on January 14, 1916, had again invaded Persia, a force of regulars having arrived at Kermanshah to support the rebels and the German agents. These still had with them the bulk of the Persian gendarmerie—some 6000 out of a total of about 7000—together with a motley army of bandits, malcontents, and fanatics, all well armed and supplied with guns, but of little resisting power against artillery fire and cavalry attacks. It was reported at this period that Prince Henry of Reuss had been recalled, and replaced as the Kaiser's chief agent in Persia by Dr. Vassel, formerly German Consul-General at Bagdad.

Field-Marshal Von der Goltz, who had organized the Turkish defence of Bagdad against General Nixon's threatening advance from the Persian Gulf, and was now controlling the investment of General Townshend at Kut, probably decided at this time to postpone his Persian plans until the fate of Kut had been sealed. The dispatch of Turkish troops to Kermanshah was only part of the "active defence" to which the Field-Marshal was now committed by the disturbing Russian operations. He was not strong enough to advance against General Baratoff in Persia, while the British were continually returning to the attack on the Tigris, and the Grand Duke was threatening Erzerum on the Caucasus front. If he had any

doubts on this subject they must have been dispelled by the thunder-clap which came with the fall of Erzerum on February 16, 1916. That astonishing success of the Russians in Armenia raised premature hopes that the Turks would be forced to relax their grip on hammer blows for Erzerum. Advancing from Hamadan along the old highway which had been the royal road from Bagdad to Teheran from time immemorial, General Baratoff forced the strongly fortified positions at Bidesuirkh Pass, occupied Sakhne,

Bagdad and the Persian Campaign: map showing approximately the lines of the British advance from the Persian Gulf and of the Russian column from Northern Persia at the end of April, 1916

Kut, hopes which seemed to be confirmed by the simultaneous movements of Russian columns towards the Tigris from Lake Van, resulting in the capture of Bitlis on March 2, and from Hamadan, where General Baratoff had consolidated his position before the Grand Duke and General Judenich had delivered their sledge- and finally breaking the Turkish resistance before Kermanshah, carried that town by storm on February 26. Still pushing west towards the Turkish frontier, and capturing some eight or ten guns in the pursuit, as well as many prisoners, the Russians occupied the town of Karind on March 11, "on the way to Bagdad", as the official

communiqué from Petrograd expressed it. This brought them, as the crow flies, within some 130 miles of Bagdad; but, if their intention had been, as the *communiqué* suggested, to push straight on over the mountains to the Tigris, it was frustrated by the stubborn Turkish defence at the Tak-i-Gerreh. Here, along the difficult and sometimes precipitous route which descends from Karind through the Zagros mountains to the Mesopotamian plain, 5000 feet below, Von der Goltz had laid his defences with some of the skill which had made his position before Kut impregnable; and though he did not live to receive the surrender of General Townshend—his death occurring at Bagdad on April 19, the day before the fall of Kut—he was probably satisfied that the Russian advance through Persia had been effectually checked among the mountains which marked the boundary between the land of the Shah and the Mesopotamian plains.

The Grand Duke's Master Strategist: General Judenich, who planned the Russian campaigns in Asia Minor, Persia, and Mesopotamia

Had he lived a few months longer he might have been less satisfied on this point. Perhaps it had formed no part of the Grand Duke's spring campaign to follow up his winter triumphs with an immediate advance on Bagdad. The difficulty of supplies in the case of such far-flung columns was necessarily stupendous, especially where the long lines of communications were constantly threatened by robber bands lurking in mountain fastnesses and ready to harass the convoys at every opportunity. In any case the fall of Kut removed all urgency in the matter, and General Judenich, who was in strategic command of the Russian Mesopotamian front, as well as of the operations which had been so brilliantly successful in Armenia, had the matter well in hand. The

two columns now operating in the direction of the Tigris, one threatening Bagdad, the other Mosul, were each part and parcel of Russia's larger Asiatic campaign, timed to fit into a scheme of strategy planned on the grand scale of modern warfare. The meaning of each move was not always clear as column after column dropped into its appointed place and then waited for unknown developments, but out of all the uncertainties of the campaign at this stage emerged at least one substantial and vital fact: Russia's mighty blows in Armenia and her opportune advance in Persia had for the time being shattered Germany's last hopes of raising the Mussulman Orient against civilized Christianity.

To what lengths of mendacity the Germans went in their efforts to win the support of the whole Mohammedan world was discovered by many of our missionaries. Bishop Stileman, at the annual meeting of the Church Missionary Society in 1916, mentioned but three of the falsehoods which they were known to have circulated with this end in view, but these were sufficiently typical. One of them was that it was Germany's chief aim to restore Islam to its proud position of a thousand years ago, the Kaiser, now a true follower of the Prophet, being called Hadji Mohammed Guilliamo. Hadji, it should be explained, is a term applied only to those who have made a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Faithful were assured that when the Kaiser was at Mecca he lay three days and nights before the great shrine, seeking to know God's will; whereupon a voice from heaven came to him as the true envoy of the Lord, the Saviour of Islam, and the sword of the Lord, saying, "Arise and fight!"

The second falsehood quoted by the Bishop, and one most assiduously circulated by German agents, was that Britain's main object in waging the war was that as she already had the bones of the Pharaohs and other ancients in the British Museum she was determined to rifle the tomb of the Prophet Mohammed and add his remains to the same collection!

Brigadier-General Sir Percy Sykes, commanding in Southern Persia (see next page)
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry)

Lie No. 3 was that the whole family of the Hohenzollerns was descended from Mohammed's sister, and that it was therefore the sacred duty of all Mohammedans at the present time to rally round the Central Powers. More amazing still was the story told to Mohammedan tribesmen that Ger-

many possessed a giant aeroplane with an all-powerful magnet, which had not only visited Petrogad, Paris, and London, but had also succeeded in drawing up the Tsar of all the Russias, the French President, and his most gracious and unwilling Majesty King George out of his bedroom in Buckingham Palace; and that all three monarchs had been taken prisoners to Berlin!

Puerile though these falsehoods might seem to us, as Bishop Stileman pointed out in quoting them, they nevertheless had a far-reaching and dangerous effect upon the ignorant people in many Mohammedan lands. Similar tales had undoubtedly been circulated in Persia, where German agents were too long allowed to exercise their baleful influence. By the spring of 1916, however, the pacification of South-eastern Persia was at length seriously undertaken by the British, with the cordial co-operation of the Persian Government. Sir Percy Sykes, one of the greatest living authorities on Persia,[1] and thoroughly at home both with the people and their language—having served as Consul-General and agent to the Governor-General in the Persian province of Khorasan from 1906 to 1913—landed at Bunder Abbas on March 16, 1916, gazetted to the temporary rank of Brigadier-General, and empowered with the duty of organizing a military police for Southern Persia. With this new force, which increased with remarkable rapidity both in strength and efficiency, and the solid backing of British troops, a new complexion was gradually given to the state of the whole surrounding region. On June 13, 1916, when our present survey comes to an end, Sir Percy Sykes clearly demonstrated the downfall of the German influence in Southern Persia by entering Kerman with the British column under his command, a march of about sixteen days from Bunder Abbas. It was at Kerman that Brigadier-General Sykes had long resided as British consul, and his influential presence was calculated to have the best possible effect among a people whose complete confidence he had gained in the past. F. A. M.

CHAPTER XIII

PORTUGAL AND THE WORLD WAR

Geographical Importance of Portugal—The Alliance with Great Britain—Circumstances of the Rupture with Germany—The Portuguese Navy—The Declaration of the British Government.

IF we wish to understand the importance of Portugal in the World War, the best as well as the shortest way to find an answer is to look at a track chart of the world. A globe is perhaps better, because it gives the real proportions of countries

[1] His *History of Persia*, in two large volumes, published in 1915, at once took rank as the standard authority on the subject.

to the whole, and their relative positions, or as the sailors have it, their bearings, to one another with more accuracy than is possible for so conventional a thing as any kind of map must be. Yet the chart will do, and all the better if it is consulted together with Messrs. Philip's *Distance and Speed Tables for Shippers.* Portugal has been drawn into the war because of her geographical position. That is not, of course, the only reason. There are others of a political character, which must not be overlooked. But they would never have come into play if it were not for the influence of geography. When we say Portugal, the name must be taken as including not only the Mother Country in the Iberian Peninsula, but all that remains to her of her once vast colonial empire —her islands in the Atlantic and possessions in Africa. The small remnants of her old widespread dominion in the East, Goa and Macao, may indeed be left aside. They now lie outside the field of the war, vast as it is.

Portugal's Geographical Importance in the War: map showing the positions of her chief harbours, her islands in the Atlantic, and her African possessions

From the mouth of the Minho to Cape St. Vincent the coast runs from the north for in round figures 360 miles. From Cape St. Vincent to the mouth of the Guadiana, roughly speaking 140 miles, it runs from west to east. On the coast facing the west Portugal possesses one really good harbour, rather difficult of access, but spacious and safe, Lisbon. On the south coast there is the fine anchorage in Lagos Bay. In any war in which the North Seas and the Mediterranean are concerned, this position must always make Portugal important, even if her whole territory were confined to the Iberian Peninsula. But this is far from being the case. On the 38th degree of latitude, opposite the southern coast of Portugal, and at a distance of 830 miles, lie the Azores. To the southwest, and at a distance of 535 miles from Lisbon, lies the island of Madeira. To the south, and a little

to the west of Madeira, lie the Cape Verde islands, at a distance (counting from the most easterly of them) of 300 miles from the mouth of the Senegal River. St. Thomas on the Equator, and in the Gulf of Guinea to the south of the mouth of the Niger, belongs to Portugal. On the west coast, and to the south of the Equator, were beyond the reach of the Central Power. But on its northern frontier the Portuguese colony touched German East Africa. The Mother Country, its islands, and its West African ports had a far more direct interest for Germany. Her navy could use their waters and their harbours so long as they remained neutral. And the islands,

Our Oldest Allies: Portuguese sailors on the march

she still holds the great province of Angola, lying between 6th and the 18th degrees of southern latitude. On the east coast she possesses Mozambique, the great territory which stretches for 1430 miles opposite the island of Madagascar. On the sea-coast this part of the still considerable possessions of Portugal has not been, and is not likely at any future time to be, brought into contact with the war. Since the German cruisers had been destroyed the straits of Mozambique more especially the Azores, were tempting objects for German aggression.

From the time when the international relations of modern States may be said to have begun, the position of Portugal on the way from northern Europe to the Mediterranean has made her friendship an object of particular importance. This beginning was also that of the history of Portugal herself. The nation as an independent State may be said to have been a product of the crusades. Until then there

was nothing to show that Portugal would separate its destiny from that of other parts of the Iberian Peninsula. At the end of the eleventh century all of it to the south of the Douro was in the hands of the Mohammedan conquerors, Arabs and Moors. But the country between the Douro and the Minho, the present northern frontier of Portugal, was given as a feudal fief to Henry of Burgundy by Alfonso VI of Castile, of whose dominions it formed part, together with the rest of the north-west of the peninsula. Alfonso had married a Burgundian princess, and he married his natural daughter Theresa to her brother Henry. The tendency of a "march", or frontier, province to grow great by conquest and to become independent was often illustrated in the early Middle Ages, and Portugal was one example among many of a common process. The son of Henry, Count of Porto, i.e. Oporto, Affonso Enriquez, i.e. Henryson, to give him his proper title, conquered beyond the Douro. His victory over the Moors at Ourique in 1139 was the beginning of the transformation of the county of Porto into the kingdom of Portugal. He won Lisbon in 1147.

The rivalry between France and England began with the birth of the kingdom. Burgundian and other French crusaders came in large numbers to help in the conquest, and they remained to form the governing class, the nobility of Portugal. English crusaders on their way to the Holy Land by sea helped to take Lisbon, and not a few of them were content to remain to help to hold the conquest. They became the vassals of Affonso Enriquez, the victor of Ourique and founder of the first dynasty of Portuguese kings. In the later part of the fourteenth century and the reign of Edward III this rivalry became flagrant. The kings of Castile were allies of the kings of France, and when the old line of Portuguese kings came to an end, they endeavoured with French help to enforce claims on the crown of Portugal. England opposed what was naturally looked on as an extension of French influence. John, called of Aviz, a natural son of the last king of the old line, was the national candidate. He was aided by England, and English archers helped him to win the battle of Aljubarrota in 1385, and plant himself firmly on the throne. The only part of a very complicated story of war, negotiations, and royal marriages which needs to be mentioned here is that the new king of Portugal married a daughter of John of Gaunt. The dynasty of Aviz, as the new line was called, was closely connected with England. Its friendship was valuable, because its dominions lay on the road of English trade to southern Spain. When the great age of Portugal began by the opening of the trade route to the East round the Cape of Good Hope at the close of the fifteenth century, Lisbon grew otherwise important to all northern Europe, for it became the emporium of the eastern trade. Merchants from England, the Netherlands, and the German Hanse towns settled in large numbers in Lisbon. The goodwill of Portugal was more an object than ever to England, and so was the friendship of England to Portugal.

The connection would appear to have been broken when the House of Aviz came to an end in its turn, and Philip II of Spain enforced his indubitably good claim to the crown of Portugal. But the interruption was short. The Portuguese crown remained united to the Spanish for sixty years only, from 1580 to 1640. Then a revolt restored the independence of Portugal and established the new dynasty of Braganza. Very soon the old rivalry of France and England began again. Both helped Portugal to free herself from Spain, but each wished to dominate her politics. From the mere fact that Portugal was more easily reached by England oversea, the French were at a disadvantage. The marriage of Charles II to Catherine of Braganza was part of a general treaty by which we guaranteed the independence of Portugal at home and her possessions abroad, in return for the surrender of Bombay. The arrangement did not produce all the results looked for, but in the main it was carried out. It has been the basis of the relations of the two countries ever since.

They were drawn closer during the eighteenth century. Portugal was the ally of Great Britain in the War of the Spanish Succession. In 1703 was made the famous Methuen Treaty, so called because it was negotiated by Sir Paul Methuen. By the terms of this treaty Portugal admitted British goods on easy terms, while Portuguese wines paid a lower duty than others in Great Britain. This not only gave Great Britain the command of an important market in Portugal and Brazil, but, what was not overlooked when the treaty was made, though it was not officially mentioned, it facilitated the smuggling of large quantities of British goods across land frontiers into Spain and Spanish America. Portugal was much taunted with having become a mere dependence of Great Britain, but by Powers which would willingly have brought her into submission to themselves. The realities of the position were well brought out in the course of the eighteenth century. British ships used Brazilian ports on the way to the East—a very important relief when scurvy was usual in long sailing voyages and before the conquest of the Cape of Good Hope. British fleets used Portuguese anchorages in Europe. On the other hand, when Spain became the ally of France and endeavoured to conquer Portugal in the Thirty Years War, British soldiers repelled the invasion in 1761. The old alliance reached its highest and heroic stage when Napoleon endeavoured to seize the whole Peninsula in 1808. The events of the Peninsular War are too numerous for record now. But it would be unjust, and uncritical too, to pass over the fact that the services rendered were mutual. If Portugal could not have driven out the French invader by her own strength, neither could the British army have held its ground for a month without the adhesion and cooperation of the Portuguese people. And it was they who had to bear the suffering, as the Duke of Wellington, with his characteristic mental honesty, allowed. In later years the British Government has not had to aid Por-

tugal against foreign invasion, but British volunteers took a most decisive share in the overthrow of the worn-out absolutist royal government. The victory of Sir Charles Napier over the fleet of the absolutist Dom Miguel in 1833 was the decisive event of the struggle for liberty. The relations of the two nations have not always been quite cordial. A few years ago certain events in South Africa did for a time

A Portuguese Torpedo Boat

embitter Portuguese feeling, but the soreness has worn away, and Portugal has ended by remembering the aid given against menaces of the Boers and the Germans in South Africa. When, therefore, the time came for her to take action in this war, a long tradition was operative to enforce immediate reasons why she should take sides with Great Britain and her Allies.

The formal declaration that a state of war had arisen between them came from Germany on March 9, 1916, when the Kaiser's representative at Lisbon handed in the notification to the Portuguese Government. The reasons given for this peremptory step were: that Portugal had requisitioned certain German merchant vessels which had been lying in her ports since the beginning of the war; that she had forbidden the coaling of German ships; and that "The extensive sojourn of British war vessels in Portuguese waters, which is also in conflict with the laws of neutrality, was allowed; Great Britain was also permitted to use Madeira as a *point d'appui* for her fleet. Guns and materials of war were sold to Entente Powers, and even a destroyer was sold to Great Britain". These and other allegations of the same character must of course be regarded as the forms which are used by diplomacy not so much for the purpose of conveying statements of fact, as because they serve to cover more substantial reasons for taking action.

Even if the Portuguese Government had favoured the Entente Powers, this, which was inevitable in the position of the country, would not in itself have imposed on Germany the alternative of either submitting to a wrong or of declaring war. The requisitioning of the interned German merchant ships would certainly not have provided a reasonable *casus belli*. So long as the two countries remained at peace Portugal would have been under an obligation to pay for the use of the steamers, and to make good their value

if the Allies were to seize them while sailing under Portuguese command. The real reasons for the peremptory line taken by Germany were easy enough to understand. In the first place, she had no reason to fear the consequences of the addition of the Portuguese navy to the other sea forces arrayed against her. Portugal does not command the resources which could enable her to indulge in such a costly form of armament as is a modern fleet. The largest of the half-score vessels or so, over and above mere harbour and river boats, which she possessed did not exceed 4200 tons.

In addition to this negative reason why Germany should be ready to seize an excuse, or to make one, for declaring war, there were others of a positive character. That such cruisers of hers as might reach the open ocean would find more prizes to destroy would be a minor consideration, but with Portugal as an open enemy she would be more free to invade Mozambique, if the course of the war in East Africa were to go in her favour. The case as it presented itself to her was that she had nothing to lose by declaring war, while there was just a possibility, though indeed a small one, that she might make some gain. As a matter of fact, Germany had not waited for the seizure of her ships by Portugal on February 23, 1916, before making an attempt to master the Portuguese colonies. In October and December, 1914, she had made raids on Angola, as Sir Edward Grey reminded the world on March 14, 1916, when he made a statement to the House of Commons. It was made on behalf of Mr. Asquith and stated the case in the most precise terms. After noting that Portugal was perfectly entitled to requisition the German ships which had lain so long in her ports, and did not go beyond her rights as a neutral, so long, of course, as she accepted her responsibility to pay for the use of them, as she had, Sir Edward Grey went on to say:

"But Portugal is not a neutral nation in the narrowest sense of the term. At the beginning of the war the Portuguese Government declared that in no circumstances would they disregard the duties of their ancient alliance with Great Britain, and now as always they have remained faithful to their obligations as our allies."

The British Government met the fidelity of Portugal by the proper corresponding guarantee of support. No immediate necessity arose for the use of the reserves which Portugal hastened to call out. Germany's power to reach her in any part of her dominions by sea had ceased long before March 9, 1916. The requisitioned steamers, on which the Allies had to some extent relied, as Sir Edward Grey also noted, to remedy the acknowledged "shortage of tonnage in all parts of the globe", free to be used for commercial purposes, did not prove so promptly available as had been hoped. The Germans left in charge of them, acting by orders from their Government, had taken measures to disable the engines. To remedy the mischief was a matter of time and trouble. Yet the addition to the forces arrayed against Germany which was made by the adhesion of Portugal to the Entente was a sensible one.

D. H.

CHAPTER XIV

VERDUN—FIRST PHASE

(February 21–April 12, 1916)

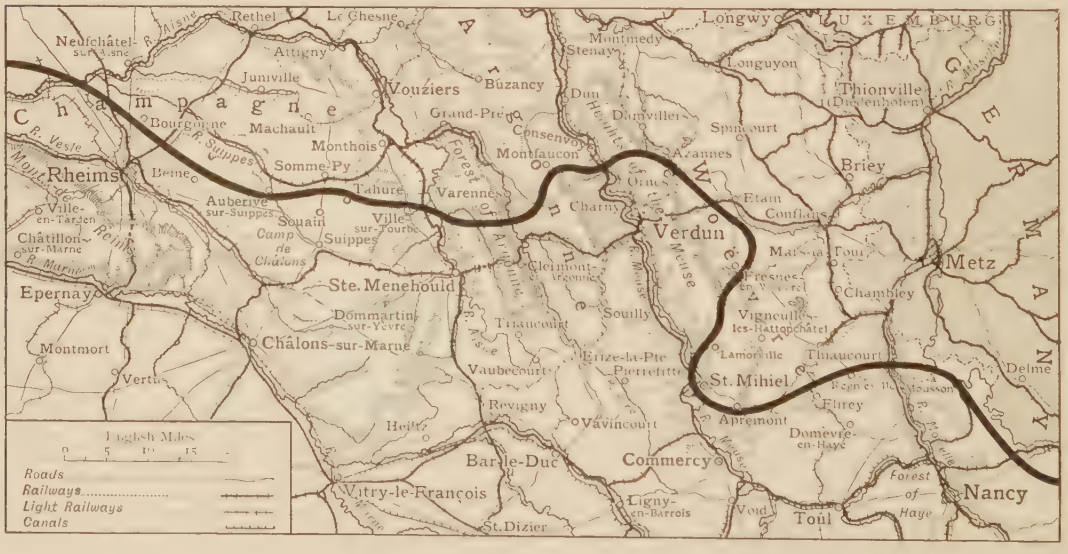
German Summer Campaign of 1916—Reasons for Striking on the Western Front—Selection of the Verdun Sector for the Great German Effort—Verdun's Position and Defences—General Sarrail's Defensive Lines—German Assemblage of Forces for the Attack on the Verdun Position—The Massed Guns—Opening of the Attack on February 21—Obliteration of the French First-line Defences—Colonel Driant's Counter-resistance—Retirement to Line of Samogneux-Herbebois—Critical Stage of February 24—French Counter-attack and Successful Occupation of their Second Line—German Occupation of Douaumont Fort as the Result of their Culminating Assault—Counter-attack by Balfervier's 20th French Corps—Temporary Cessation of the German Attempt East of the Meuse—The Offensive on the West Side of the Meuse—Successive Attacks on the Mort Homme and Cumières—Attempt to outflank Mort Homme by Avocourt and Hill 304—The New German Rearrangement of Forces—Futile German Attack of March 28—A Return to the Attack on the East Side of the Meuse—The Double Attack on Hill 304 and Mort Homme—End of the First Stage of the Battle of Verdun with the German Failure of the First and Second Week of April.

AFTER the great offensive of the French on the Champagne front, in the autumn of 1915, an attempt which, despite its partial success, definitely committed the opponents to another winter campaign, both sides utilized the winter, as armies in previous centuries had done, as a period of preparation. The usual flock of conflicting rumours filled the air as to the issue of these preparations, but only three of them need be mentioned. The first was that the Allies in the West were preparing a great spring offensive on a greater scale of combination and momentum than that of September; the second was that Germany was contemplating a renewed attack on Russia, with the intention of completing the incomplete advantage gained in the summer of 1915; the third was that Germany's campaign of 1916 was to be a vast attack on the Franco-British front, seeking there the decision which should end the war by breaking through or by immobilizing the French and British forces to the same or to a greater exent than the Russian. As the intelligence work on both sides was remarkably good, though the German spy organization, like the German artillery, was more abundant in material, the French Head-quarters Staff were no doubt quite able to predict the German intention by the beginning of the year, and could guess that whatever German offensive was developed, would be set in motion before the Allies were ready or willing to attack. There was no great surprise, therefore, about the German attack, such surprises being almost impossible under the conditions of the campaign, and the only surprises at all likely to be of value being those which might arise from the precise locality, magnitude, and timing of the onset.

The reasons why Germany struck at the Allied lines in the West were sound. The British army was steadily gaining in numbers and efficiency, and, even

more to the point, the heavy balance against it of artillery and shells was being rapidly redressed. In France and in Britain alike the ammunition was being piled up to an extent that made it impossible for German strategy to sit still and do nothing in the face of the growing threat. A timely blow might weaken or dissolve the threat, more especially as Germany had devoted the winter, as the Allies had done, to the accumulation of shells and the aggregation of guns, while her initial superiority in them had not been caught up, and could still be counted on. It was sound policy also to strike at the strongest of her enemies, and this policy had the recommendation of the two leaders who had won for Germany the successes against Russia. Von Hindenburg thought that it was of little positive value to advance against Russia in the early spring, and that Russia was quite out of action for some time to come. Von Mackensen's experience in driving his battering-ram of massed artillery through the Russian front on the Dunajec prompted him to urge similar tactics against the French. The utmost resources of the German artillery machine had never been brought to bear in the Dunajec manner on the French—if these resources, supplemented by a commensurate weight of infantry, were concentrated against any section of the French lines, they must, it was urged, penetrate it. Was it not a mere matter of weight and numbers? Could not the Germans magnify and improve upon the French September assault in Champagne?

Reasons for the selection of Verdun as the sector of assault could be quite well maintained, though the idea that the capture of Verdun would open the road to Paris was not one of them. If, however, the lines at Verdun had been broken by the battering-ram's onslaught, as the Germans may have, at



Map showing the French Line from Champagne to St. Mihiel before the German Assault on Verdun

The Ordeal of Verdun: one of the city streets ruined by the German bombardment, but kept clear for the passage of French troops and supplies to the firing-line

the highest, pitched their hopes, the French position would have been very much embarrassed. Verdun did not constitute a pronounced salient of the French lines, but it was at the northern extremity of that great bulge which the Germans had made at St. Mihiel. If anything happened at Verdun to compromise the French position seriously, a second hammer blow from underneath at St. Mihiel might convert compromise into disaster. But, even if these greater successes were not achieved, a crack or a sudden dent at Verdun would probably result in the capture of large numbers of men and masses of material which could not be removed by way of the bridges of the Meuse. The Meuse was flooded in spring; the bulk of the French defences in men on the east of the river were distributed over a wide arc, like the arc of a bow of which the Meuse was the string. A sudden flattening of the bow might have crushed the forces within the arc. Lastly, there was the political consideration that the capture of Verdun, of which, as of its defences, a great deal had been made in official photographs and semi-official descriptions, would strike a resounding blow throughout all the countries at war.

Verdun has always been a famous city. It was fortified by Vauban for Louis XIV, and it made a stout resistance till it was starved out after a ten weeks' siege by the Germans in 1870. After the loss of Alsace-Lorraine it became, with Belfort, Toul, and Épinal, one of the eastern bul-

For the Defence of Verdun: one of the huge shell reserves behind the French line

warks of France, and, converted into a great entrenched camp, formed the left wing of the fortifications of the heights of the Meuse. It was fortified with an inner line of redoubts, and beyond them an outer line of forts and batteries was pushed out in a circuit of some 30 miles. Before the war all the forts had been brought up to date; but when the war began, and other forts began to clatter down, the work of entrenching far in front of them was begun in haste and not a moment too soon. But the Battle of the Marne frustrated the efforts of the Crown Prince to invest Verdun, and General Sarrail, who had held it against him with a field army, enlarged its perimeter of defence. In the spring of 1915 the French won Les Eparges, which gave them an advanced position in the heights of the Meuse east of Verdun and overlooking the plain of the Woëvre. They were never able to press this advantage so as to nip the German salient at St. Mihiel, but it strengthened the Verdun lines by extending them.

Verdun, the old town, is deep-sunk on the Meuse. Some distance north of it, on the western bank of the river, rise low hills, of which the nearest and the most prominent is the ridge of Charny. North of Charny again, on this side, are hills dominated by such heights as Hill 304, Hill 295 (Mort Homme)[1], and Hill 265, which became famous from the fights for them. On the eastern side of Verdun the heights of the Meuse rise steeply to a broken table-land 5 to 6 miles broad. Below the table-land, to the east, is the plain of the Woëvre. The table-land has great woods of beech and chestnut, and is cut by wooded ravines. The French lines, as thrust forward by Sarrail, lay, at the beginning of February, 1916, 9 miles north of the town of Verdun, and 8 miles to the east, at their farthest, beyond the table-land of the eastern heights of the Meuse in the flat plain of the Woëvre. From the Argonne, on the west, the line curved gently

[1] For clearness of narration and because the English substitutes for Mort Homme, Oie Hill, Corbeaux Wood, &c., have become familiarized to English readers under the names of Dead Man, Goose Hill, Crows Wood, &c., these substitutes are more generally employed in the text.

The Defender of Verdun: General Pétain (centre) walking with General Joffre on his right

north-east towards Forges, and passed along the hollow which falls from Forges into the Meuse. The line crossed the Meuse, ran past Consenvoye, Brabant-sur-Meuse, and Caures Wood, passed north of another wood and along the heights of the Meuse towards Herbebois and Ornes. It then left the heights of the Meuse to strike south-eastwards in the plain of the Woëvre as far as Fromezey, and thence to curve back again through Fresnes, and, regaining the heights at Les Eparges, to strike south towards St. Mihiel. That was the outermost line. The first inner line went through Samogneux, Beaumont, Fosses Wood, and Bezonvaux. The second inner line went through Bras, Douaumont, Hardaumont, Vaux, and Eix. Between the first and second inner lines positions had been prepared to command the curve of the Meuse, as well as on Poivre Hill, and on the southern slopes between Louvemont and Haudremont about the farm of Haudremont. All this succession of positions had been strengthened, not by concentration at the forts, most of which had been dismantled, but by labyrinthine trenches, hidden roads, concealed gun-positions, and barbed wire. But this cunning system of defences, though it magnified Verdun as a fortress, could not diminish some of the disadvantages which modern artillery imposed on the position as a place to be defended. The chief of these disadvantages was that all the French ground eastwards of Verdun, in the arc of the bow, had to be supplied across the Meuse, and principally over the Verdun bridges. The railways supplying Verdun were not immune from the attack of German long-range guns—and there was always the danger of being jammed against the Meuse if the attack were on a crushing scale. The French had foreseen the perils. Sarrail had so strengthened the trench defences and the interior communications as to remove the chance that any attack could be fast enough, or fierce enough, to jam the French between their defences and the river, and he had organized a system of motor transport to feed the men and guns of an army of a quarter of a million. But he could not deprive the Germans of the advantages of wooded positions north of his lines, where they could mass men unperceived, or of the good heavy-gun positions which they possessed at the wood of Forges, on the west, and the two hills of Ornes on the east. Nor could he ensure that the defences on which he had lavished so much skill should remain in the state of polish to which he brought them before he exchanged his command at Verdun for another at Salonika.

The German High Command spared no pains to conceal from the Allies the direction in which the Teutonic "push" was to be made. From the first week in January onwards a number of feint thrusts were made on the whole line of front from Switzerland to the sea, in Alsace, in Champagne, on the Aisne and the Yser, at the Hohenzollern and Hulluch positions, and the Vimy heights. Any one of the positions selected for these attacks might reasonably have been subjected to a main attack, and by multiplication of these feints the Germans hoped

to confuse expectation as to the right one. They were at great pains to prevent aerial scouting on the part of the Allies, and the early weeks of the year saw the appearance of their swift aeroplane—the Fokker—which was designed for defence and as a weapon to keep off intruders. Their own scouting aeroplanes became more daring.

To an extent these measures were successful. They were not proof against "intelligence information", and even rumour spoke of the Kaiser's presence on the Western Front, and of rehearsals and unexampled preparations; but these preparations might equally well have been designed for a blow at the Argonne or east of Verdun. The Germans employed still another device to confuse anticipation. The September offensive of the French, in 1915, had been heralded by long, sustained bombardments. The German sustained fury of preliminary bombardment gave much less notice. Instead of being a matter of days, it lasted no more than a few hours before the infantry was launched to follow it up. When the storm burst it was of a fury that not all the knowledge of the preparations which had been made, and which in the few days immediately before February 21, 1916, could no longer be concealed from the scouting aeroplanes, could have foretold.

The seven miles of the French positions from Brabant on the Meuse eastwards to Herbebois, was held by three French divisions, part of General Humbert's Third Army. Against it the Germans were ready with fourteen divisions. Their central army, on the line Bois de Haumont to Azannes, consisted of the 18th Army Corps, the 3rd Army Corps,[1] picked men of Brandenburg, the 15th Army Corps and a Bavarian Ersatz Division.

On the right flank of this, to the west, another army corps was deployed from the Bois de Haumont to Consenvoye on the Meuse, and beyond it westwards to Varennes. It consisted of the 7th Army Corps of the 2nd Landwehr Division, the 11th and 12th Reserve Divisions, with another Reserve Division, the 14th.

On the easterly flank, along the railway to Metz, was another army of the 5th Army Corps, the Bavarian Army Corps and the 5th Landwehr Division.

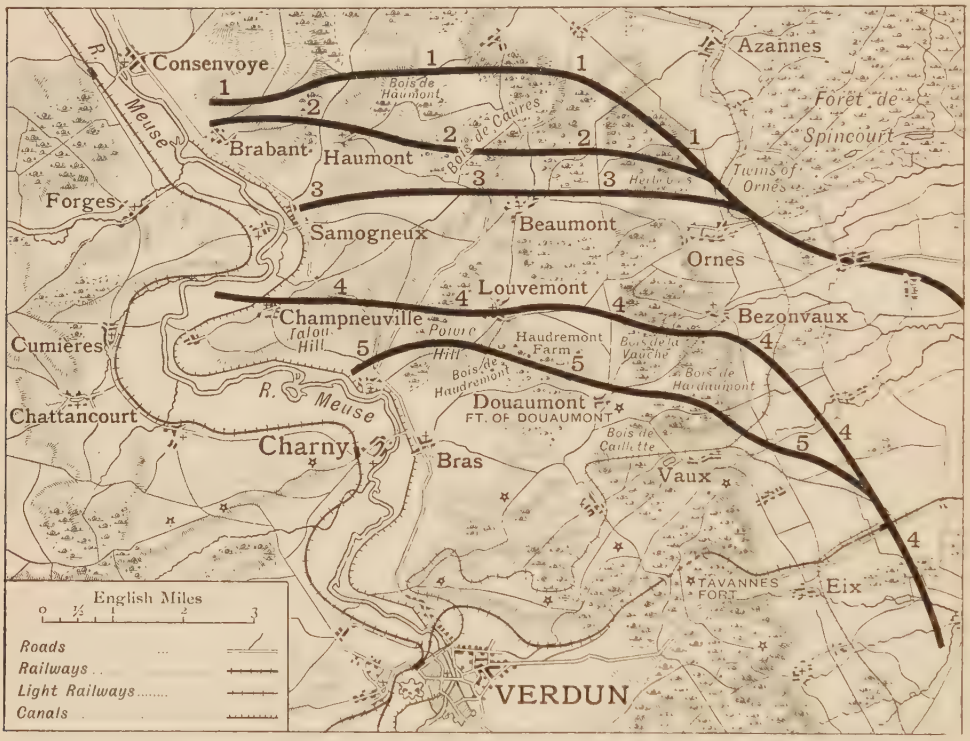
In all, not far short of half a million men. The guns which were massed cannot be computed: a correspondent in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* wrote the following impression of them:—

"Over the roads leading towards Verdun artillery and ammunition were brought up in such quantities as the history of war has never seen on such a small space. The country was covered with guns. We could hardly believe what we saw round Verdun. Long rows of guns as in old battle pictures, set up in open fields with gunners standing about them, and on the hill-tops observation-posts with their great telescopes uncovered. When I shut my eyes I still see before me those curved lines, row upon row in endless array, with gunners moving about them in the open battle-field."

It was this array of guns which

[1] On the 3rd Army Corps of Brandenburgers fell the brunt of the culminating struggle. It was withdrawn on the 3rd of March, and replaced by the 113th Reserve Division.

opened the ball at seven o'clock on the morning of February 21. From the wood of Forges, from the wood of Consenvoye, and from the forest of Spincourt, as well as from the little wood of Grenilly, north of Ornes, the great 13-inch Austrian guns, as well as the Krupp 12-inches, began; they were supported by guns of every calibre above 4-inch. Never has so concentrated a torrent of shells been poured in on a position. It blotted out the French first line trenches, it smashed the trenches leading to them, it made firewood of the coppices and woods, it altered the shape of the hills. In that four hours' bombardment the French front lines melted away. The Germans had it all their own way; their guns, massed far behind, were firing by the map, and had the range of the French trenches to a yard; the February morning was thick and raw, with low visibility, so that the French artillery could not find the German guns to answer them. It was as certain as anything could be that when this volcanic blast ceased the German troops would merely walk in. That was expected; the thin line of French troops retired, not without losses



Map showing the Various Stages in the First Phase of the Attack on Verdun

The German attack on the French lines at Verdun began on the east side of the Meuse at dawn on February 21, 1916. The most northerly line drawn on the map shows the French position at the time of the German onset. The other lines show the successive positions taken up by the French as they were forced back on February 22, 23, 24, and 25. On Friday, February 25, the final adjustment of the French line in the first phase of the struggle east of the Meuse took place. It crossed Poivre Hill and Douaumont Plateau.

FROM AN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH

Sir David Beatty, K.C.B.

Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet

commensurate with this unexampled shelling, to their support lines. These lines were not good. After the indefatigable Sarrail had left Verdun, this section of the line, so long left quiescent by the enemy, had not marched with the times. The lines had not been "improved", as the German so industriously improves *his* trenches; and they gave bad cover for reinforcements. It was an occasion when the best of cover was necessary, for the long-projected German assault left nothing to chance, neither curtain fire to hold off reinforcements and intercept retreat, nor pioneer battalions to examine the effect of the bombardment and prepare it against the counter-assault, nor ample troops to occupy the position. The programme was fulfilled. Firing-trenches and most of the support-trenches were carried in the centre in the two woods of Haumont and Caure. The flanks at Brabant on the left, and Herbebois on the right, were held, and a French counter-attack, late in the afternoon, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Driant, won back some of the ground lost in the wood of Caures. But this was no more than the gallant and necessary sacrifice to gain time. The character of the German blow had revealed itself to the alert French mind. There was nothing to do but to yield to the blow, retiring to positions where its momentum could be resisted and reinforcements be brought up to withstand increasing pressure. Until that position of equilibrium was reached, counter-attack on a large scale was out of the question. Counter-attack on a small scale would be of the nature of rear-guard actions. To the French soldiers of these front lines was given the task of selling the positions as dearly as they could.

That task was greatly performed. At daybreak the German attack began with the torrent of shells again methodically let loose. The left wing pivot of Brabant still held; the right-hand corner at Herbebois began to crumble; the fierce French counter-attacks in the Haumont and Caures woods were unable to prevent the masses of Germans from boring in. All day the French were out-shelled; but Haumont and Caures were not lost till nightfall; and when from Head-quarters came the order to retreat, Colonel Driant's Chasseurs could hardly be made to obey it. Colonel Driant died. At Head-quarters it was understood that retreat was necessary, that resistance then and there could be maintained only at a desperate cost. Brabant was still in French hands, but it now jutted out dangerously. Brabant must go, and the line be retired so that it would stretch in an almost west-and-east line from Samogneux on the Meuse to just north of Beaumont village; thence a shade north of east to Herbebois, and so on, curving round to Ornes. From Ornes the line, leaving the plateau, struck out into the plain of the Woëvre; and this part of the line was shortly to be revised in a drastic manner.

On the 23rd the German bombardment began on the new Samogneux-Herbebois line; the German attack was renewed. Neither the bombardment nor the attack had the precision

of the first days, and the French were able to retire in better order and more slowly; but by the end of the day their line was again jagged and dented in the middle, and the wings held on to their peril. Out in the plain of the Woëvre the thinly held lines were being menaced by German guns. A contraction on a large scale of the French front had become necessary. Accordingly, in the night of the 23rd–24th, preparations were made to relinquish the east-west line from Samogneux on the Meuse to Ornes for a new line, Champneuville on the Meuse past Louvemont in the centre to Bezonvaux, which is in a ravine just below the Meuse plateau. The outposts in the Woëvre plain were drawn in close to the plateau.

The day following, Thursday 24, was one of the early critical stages of the battle. The German programme had gone well, though it was a little behind the clock. They began to speed it up, helped therein by the French necessity. On the French retirement their waves of

Crucial Points in the German Attacks on Verdun: general view—continued on the opposite page—of the village and Fort of Douaumont during the assaults of February and March, 1916

attack pressed hard, so that the garrison of Ornes on the extreme right had difficulty in avoiding capture. The other wing at Samogneux held on more firmly, but it had to go after making the Germans pay thousands of men for the hills between this line and the new one to be taken up. But Beaumont in the old centre was isolated and the woods on either side were taken; and—a dangerous thrust—the Germans came close up to Louvemont, the new centre getting well astride of the road going north-east to Ornes. That was perilously close to the position which the French meant to occupy, but were not yet ready to occupy. But that night the retreating French soldiers made the first of those great rallies which enabled their generals to break the German plan. They had fought a desperate rear-guard action for four days; they now rose to a counter-resistance which held up the Germans while the French High Command consolidated their forces on the new and last position covering Verdun. Positions had been prepared

Drawn by D. Macpherson

Crucial Points in the German Attacks on Verdun: general view—continued from the opposite page—of Fort Douaumont during the assaults of February and March, 1916

on the Ridge of Talou, inside the loop which the Meuse makes here, and on the Poivre Ridge. The new line was to run from Vacherauville on the Meuse along this ridge of Poivre, then just south of Louvemont, past Haudremont and Douaumont, and through the wood of Hardaumont to the edge of the hills at the ravine of Vaux. On the morning of Friday 25 the line held was a little in advance of this, thrown out in front of the two keys of the position, the Poivre Hill and the plateau of Douaumont.

In falling snow the prompt German bombardment began, and the German divisions were loosed on the attenuated French front in the knowledge that this was the last position to be won. Eighteen German divisions were ready for the central assault on this 4½-mile front from the Poivre Ridge to the eastern spur of Hardaumont above the Vaux ravine. Poivre Ridge is the western spur of the wide Louvemont plateau; the eastern spur of the plateau is topped by Haudremont farm. East of that again is the plateau of Douaumont with several spurs cut by ravines all clothed in trees. It is not a clear geometrical position, but is broken up by all these wooded ravines, some of which lead north-east to Bézonvaux. The most westerly wooded spur of Douaumont is called the Wood of La Vauche; the most easterly is Hardaumont wood. Douaumont village, Douaumont Fort, and Douaumont redoubt stand, or rather stood, on top of the plateau some 600 feet above the level plain. The village is to the west, the other positions from a third to half a mile from it.

The Germans came at the two ends, Poivre and Douaumont. The attack on the Poivre Ridge was a failure. The Germans had not been able to range their artillery so effectively on the new positions; the French guns from either side of the Meuse had the range, and broke up attack after attack all day long. But the fiercer assault, and the main one, was that which was simultaneously made on the Douaumont plateau. Taking what shelter there was from the woods, the Germans pushed up from Fosses and Caurières, up the spur of La Vauche, and from the glens of Bézonvaux. They came in masses and in waves, reaching the rim of the plateau in remnants, only to have the remnants slaughtered. All that day the German sacrifice was wholly in vain. The thin line had held the position and had held it till General Pétain arrived. He was badly wanted, and he came in advance of his reserves and reinforcements. He was to witness the culminating effort of the enemy on the Douaumont position, on the two miles of which their assault on Saturday became narrowed. The village was a ruin, the fort battered, but the position, if won, would lead the way to Verdun and scrap all the French defences on the eastern side of the river. It is said that the Kaiser was on the hills at Ornes to watch the success of the great hammer blow; it is known that orders had been given to take Douaumont at all costs, that German troops, many of them boys, were sent forward drugged with ether to the attack, and that Berlin was anticipating the inevitable success.

The Ruins of Douaumont: a corner of the famous village — showing in the background the glacis of the fort—photographed between the two series of German assaults in February and March, 1916, during which it was four times captured and recaptured

The 3rd Army Corps, which was poured away in this attack, and the 15th Army Corps undertook the task of storming the smooth 300 yards between the shelter of the woods and the crest. Time after time the attack was smashed, but about ten o'clock on Saturday morning the 24th Brandenburg Regiment, brave fighting-men indeed, emerged from the fire and burst their way into the French trenches at the Fort of Douaumont—between the village and the redoubt. The line was pierced, and the news was flashed to Berlin and over Europe that "Douaumont, the eastern pillar of the Verdun defences, was solidly in German hands".

The news and the exultation were premature. The feat had been a splendid one, but it was unavailing. General Pétain at once sent in the reserves which had followed him, General Balfervier's 20th Corps, the corps from Nancy which had held the Grand Couronné, sixteen months before, in a counter-attack. General Balfervier's men only wanted such an opportunity. They flung the Germans back once more to the rim of the plateau—all except the Brandenburgers, who held out in the ruins of the fort—and by this one blow made the whole of the German success of little value. The Brandenburgers had thrust in the thin point of the wedge, but the wedge could not be driven in, the opening could not be enlarged, and the point might itself be broken off.

This great counter-attack, a remarkable piece of perfectly timed strategy, marked the end of the first phase of the attack. The first great effort of the Germans had failed in essentials, because the object which they sought had eluded them, and the price they had paid for the ground won had been wholly out of proportion to its value. It was now General Pétain's task to consolidate his position so as to resist the further German attacks which, now that the outline of the German plan of campaign had been revealed, were certain to come. He had to reorganize communications, and indeed to construct them; to re-make the trenches and put the defences into order to resist a more tremendous gun-fire than had ever been levelled at any positions; to bring up supports and provide for their regular rotation; to establish artillery to cope with the unprecedented German concentration of guns. The first round had been ended by the French counter-stroke, but it was impossible that the German High Command should give up its plan without trying to wrest success for it, by the same means as at first or by other means. For some days the plan was pursued as if in the hope or expectation that by perseverance it would succeed, but probably also as a mask for a revision of tactics.

The attack went on during Sunday, 27th, and Monday, 28th, of February, but with more dispersion and less fury. The westerly attack on the Poivre Ridge came to a standstill largely because the French guns on the other side of the Meuse raked the German columns. The Germans could get no farther, and the French counter-attacks at the Louvemont end could not thrust them back because of

the German guns, now advanced to the new Beaumont positions. Nor could the French eject the Brandenburgers from the fort at Douaumont or get them out of Hardaumont wood. Meanwhile the Germans began to project attacks farther south, seeking a weak spot in the French line on the Woëvre at Eix, and at Manheulles, south of Eix, where the 3rd Bavarian Army Corps was sent into action. The exchanges here were approximately equal. Hard struggles took place at Eix, Manheulles, and at Fresnes on the Verdun road, but it was quite obvious that no German attack from the plain of the Woëvre could have much chance of success in a rainy March. The snow and the rain had turned the clayey soil into swamps and ponds; the only way for heavy artillery was the metalled road or the railway, and a concentration of attack, such as had just stopped short of success on the Douaumont ridge, was an impossibility. If the Germans were to succeed, they must substitute a new plan.

They were quick to do so. They had put their money, or rather their heaviest metal, on the attack east of the Meuse, and for the 12-inch and 16-inch howitzers the emplacements had been built in the woods of Spincourt. But they had ample means of intercommunication behind their lines, and between the two banks of the Meuse, and heavy guns and the shells for them can be moved. So the new plan was to crack the French lines on the west side of the Meuse, drive them out of their artillery positions, and so remove the barrier which this artillery offered to the attack on Poivre Ridge and the prosecution of the general attack on the east side. The blow, if successful, would also threaten the railway communications of Verdun. So, in the lull of a few days at the end of February and the beginning of March, German guns and ammunition were transported from Spincourt on the east to Montfaucon on the west; and on Tuesday, March 2, a new bombardment began, on the French lines between the Argonne forests and the Meuse.

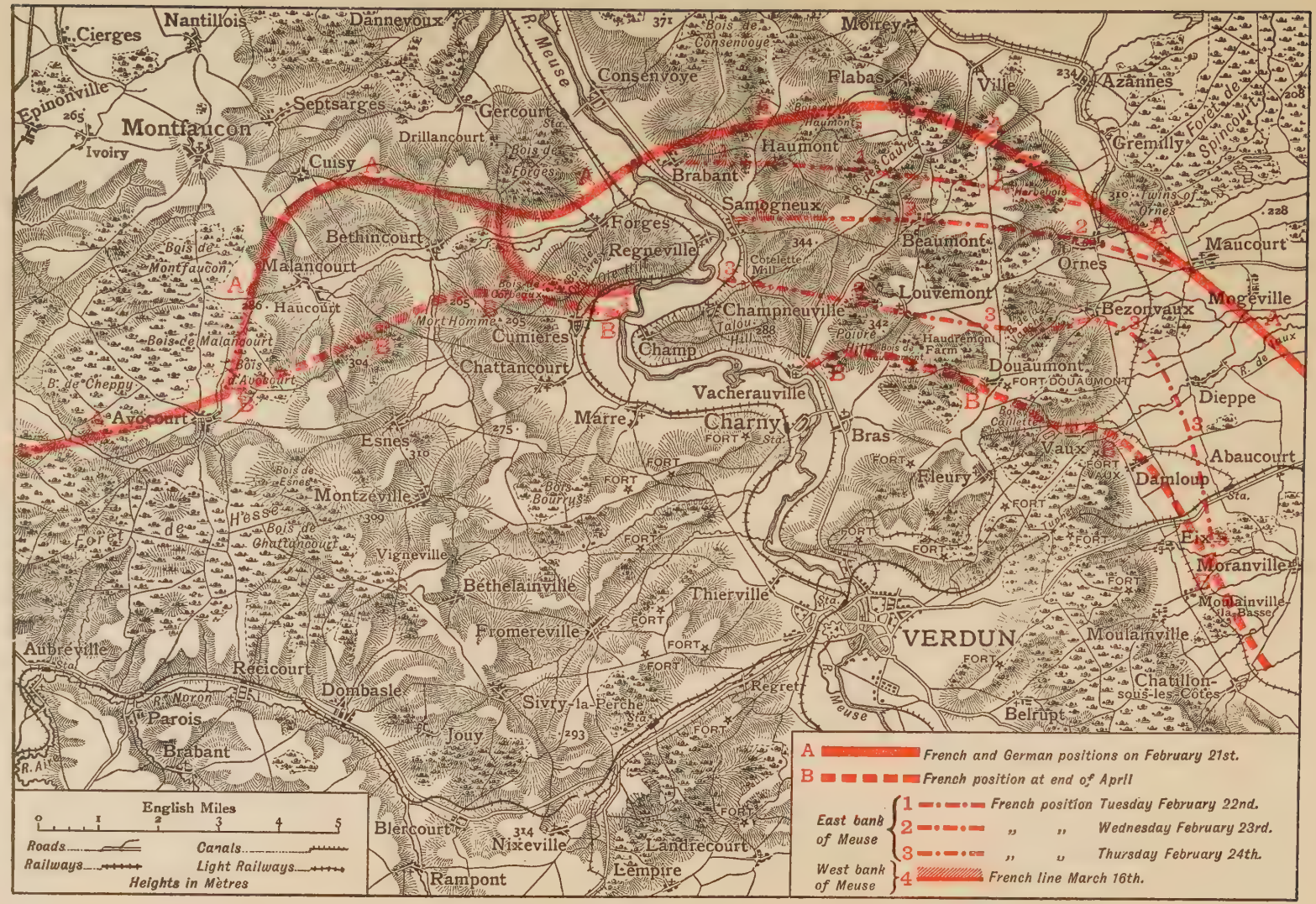
From the wood of Cheppy on the west the French lines ran north-eastward through the woods of Avocourt, Malancourt, and Montfaucon, covering the villages of Avocourt and Malancourt, but falling two miles short of the hill of Montfaucon. Then they turned east, covering Bethincourt and the road which goes from Malancourt through Bethincourt and Regneville to the Meuse. Here they were just south of the Forges wood, and just north of the Forges brook and the succession of hills which the marshy waters of the brook lave. These hills, with their odd names, all mark stages in the struggle on the east bank. The main ridge is called the Goose's Crest; and nearest to the Meuse it is clothed by the Crow's wood, with the parent Cumières wood behind it. Farther away to the western end of the ridge are the two heights of the Mort Homme. The veritable Dead Man's Hill, 295 metres high, is farthest west; the dominated height, Hill 265, is farther east. To the south-west of Dead Man, with a gap in between, is Hill 304. This row of hills formed

French Official Photograph

Heroes of Verdun: parading the colours of a division which greatly distinguished itself in the defence

The colours were paraded before General Gouraud, who lost one of his arms in the Gallipoli campaign.

the first French artillery positions. The key to them was Dead Man; but just as Dead Man commanded the positions nearer the Meuse, so Hill 304 supported and commanded Dead Man. If the Goose's Crest position as a whole could be carried, the French must retire on their inner position of the ridge of Charny; and, though that would not imply the fall


Nantillois
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Cierges
Epinonville
Montfaucon
Ivoiry
Septsarges
Gercourt
Drillancourt
Cuisy
Bethincourt
Malancourt
Haucourt
Cumières
Chattancourt
Avocourt
Esnes
Montzéville
Vigneville
Béthelainville
Fromereville
Aubréville
Récicourt
Dombasle
Parois
Brabant
Jouy
Sivry-la-Perche
Blercourt
Nixeville
Rampont
Lemmpire
Landrecourt
Regret
Thierville
Marre
Vacherauville
Charny
Champneuville
Champ
Regneville
Forges
Consenvoye
Haumont
Brabant
Samogneux
Beaumont
Louvemont
Douaumont
Vaux
Fleury
Bras
VERDUN
Belrupt
Chatillon-sous-les-Côtes
Moulainville
Moranville
Damloup
Abaucourt
Dieppe
Bezonvaux
Ornes
Maucourt
Mogeville
Azannes
Ville
Flabas
Moirey
Gremilly
Forêt de Spincourt
R. Meuse
R. Aire
R. Noron
R. de Woëvre
English Miles
Roads
Railways
Canals
Light Railways
Heights in Mètres
A French and German positions on February 21st.
B French position at end of April
East bank of Meuse
1 French position Tuesday February 22nd.
2 " " Wednesday February 23rd.
3 " " Thursday February 24th.
West bank of Meuse
4 French line March 16th.

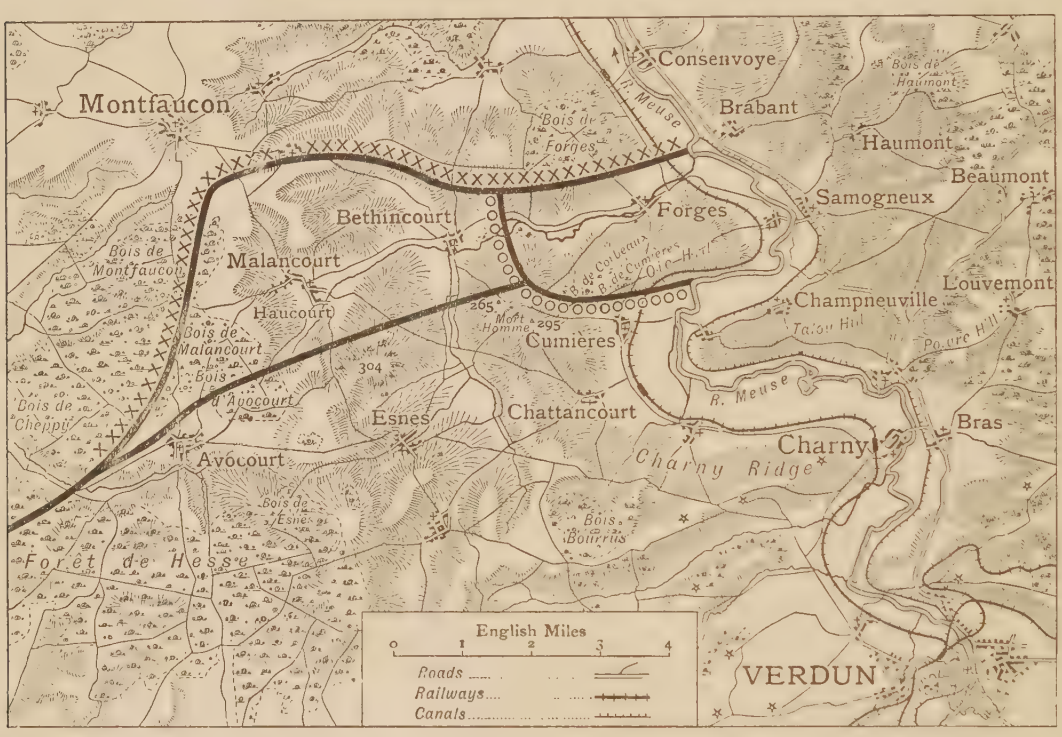
of Verdun, it would imply that the chief artillery position protecting Poivre Hill on the other bank from being taken would have been removed.

The German enterprise began with a bombardment on March 2, and this bombardment lasted four days, and consequently disclosed, without leaving much room for doubt, the German intention. They masked it by the resumption of an attack on the Douaumont position, but this was undertaken quite as much with the idea of keeping the French busy here as with any other intention. A strong assault was delivered on Douaumont village, into the ruins of which the attackers penetrated; but as the village is below the crest, and the French held the higher slopes, there was no great harm in that. There were also tentative advances from Haudremont wood, and a push towards Vaux. But all the time the villages west of Verdun, the French communications, and Verdun itself were being shelled by long-range fire, and the Germans were massing in and behind Forges wood. On the morning of Monday, March 6, the 7th German Reserve Corps was sent forward. Clearly the French could not hold on here, for on the other bank the Germans were well to the south of them, behind them, and on their right flank, and so could enfilade them with fire. The French therefore fell back, selling the position as dearly as they could, and took up the prepared lines behind the Goose's Crest. Pushing forward, the Germans got as far as Regneville, in the loop of the Meuse, by nightfall, and were pushing up the ridge. They had got a footing in that part of the Crow's wood which clothes the northern slopes of the ridge, and they had won the most easterly crest by the morning.[1] Tuesday dawned with a repetition of results, on the western side of the Meuse, which had marked the attack of February 21 on the eastern side—the French had relinquished all their first positions. But they had fallen back with little loss to the second. They were in better trim to hold their ground now and to counter-attack. On Tuesday they won back part of the Crow's wood, but farther west, towards Béthincourt, had to stand up to a heavy attack. This struggle went on for a week, till Tuesday, March 14.

It was diversified by a well-concerted and determined attempt of the Germans to take the village of Vaux on the eastern side, and so to outflank the Douaumont position. This attack began on March 9, at midnight, when a brigade of the 9th Reserve Division made their way up the Vaux ravine and got into the ruined village. The French drove them out with the bayonet. They returned, reinforced, and on a wider front, passing the village and getting up to the fort on the hill. They were driven back. They came again in a final burst (on Saturday the 11th), but the momentum of the attack failed at the wire entanglements of the fort, and another costly example had been added to the Germans' indecisive results. There were other co-ordinated attacks on Manheulles and Eix, which attained nothing better.

[1] This crest was also called 265, but it is quite distinct from the Hill 265 which is a spur of the Dead Man.

All this time the struggle between Béthincourt and the Meuse was continuing, and on the morning of Tuesday the 14th came the great bid for the Dead Man. The French line ran sharply away south-east from Béthincourt over that outlier of the Dead Man which is called Hill 265, and thence along the Goose's Crest to the Meuse. It was at Hill 265 that the German attack, made with a division and two brigades, 25,000 bayonets, debouched from Crow's wood. One brigade advanced towards the Dead Man's highest ridge; another on the slopes of the 265 position; the centre, a Silesian division, came on in waves against the French main position. The French held them everywhere except on the slopes of Hill 265, where the Silesians captured two positions below the crest and made it untenable. Berlin promptly announced that the Dead Man had been captured, which was a lie. There was a day's interval, and on Thursday 16th a second German attack on the same lines as the first strove to make the lie good. It was riddled by the 75's on the flank and broken; a French counter-attack drove what was left of it back to the shelter of the Crow's wood. The 16th was a bad day for the Germans; another night attack on Vaux was



The German Attack on the French Positions west of the Meuse

The most northerly line, marked with XXX's, shows the French and German trenches in contact on March 6, 1916. The line intersecting this, marked with OOO's, shows the French position taken up under pressure of the German attack on March 16. This line was afterwards straightened to the position indicated by the addition of the third line in the map running from Avocourt to Mort Homme, and remained thus to April 10.

caught, first by the French search-lights and then by the French guns, and was left bleeding on the slopes in front of the fort.

There ended for the time the second stage of the battle of Verdun. The original plan had been to break in the flattish curve of the French line on the east of the Meuse as a 16-inch shell smashes the cupola of a fort. When the smashing blow failed to get home, and the cupola began to resemble rather a door which obstinately refuses to be pushed back because somebody is pushing on the other side, the plan was revised. An attempt was made to get behind the hinges of the door on the western side of the Meuse. This attempt first attacked the key position of the Dead Man. It now prepared to attack the key of Dead Man, Hill 304. Also, the great enterprise having been launched, new German divisions were brought up to support it. By the middle of March the reconstituted German army of Verdun was as follows:—

West of the Meuse (8½ divisions).	Xth Reserve Corps (2 divisions). VIth Reserve Corps (2 divisions). 192nd Brigade. 11th Bavarian Division. 2nd Landwehr Division. XVIth Corps (2 divisions).
East of the Meuse (12 divisions).	Vth Reserve Corps (2 divisions). VIIth Reserve Corps (2 divisions). 121st, 58th, 118th Divisions. XVIIIth Corps (refitting). IIIrd Corps (refitting).

The IIIrd Corps was that of the Brandenburger, and had spent half or more of its effectives in the first great attack on the Douaumont Plateau.

In the Woëvre Plain (4 divisions).	Bavarian Ersatz Division. XVth Corps (2 divisions). Königsburg. ? Division.

These twenty-four and a half divisions, with their attendant artillery, would give an approximate yield of half a million of men over a front of 25 miles, or 20,000 men to the mile.

The new bombardment began on March 17, and went on till midday on the 20th, when the first attack towards Hill 304 was sped towards the Avocourt wood, which, should it be taken, would afford first-rate cover for massing an attack on the hill. A Bavarian division, headed by a pioneer corps of Flammenwerfers, who carried devices to squirt liquid fire, fought its way to the eastern part of the wood. Their efforts were seconded by Würtembergers, and towards evening, in spite of the losses inflicted by the French guns, the German line was pushed to the clear edge of the wood. The next two days they spent in consolidating the position and in building a redoubt in the wood, while the rest of the French front at Malancourt and Haucourt was hammered. The Germans made slow progress, but they got on. Then after one of the customary lulls of preparation the German artillery-fire intensified on Tuesday the 28th to the degree which heralded an assault on a large scale. The point attacked was weakly held by the French in men but strongly supported by the French guns. The Germans threw in their troops with their yet unbroken pertinacity, and Malancourt was slowly yielded to them. But the real danger was not here but in that Avocourt wood, whence the Germans could emerge with a much smaller breadth of danger-zone to cross. Towards the wood, therefore, General Pétain loosed one

of his rare counter-attacks. It succeeded. The Würtembergers were driven back from the edge of the wood, their laboriously constructed redoubt fell into French hands, and it was held against counter-attacks. But, this having been accomplished, it was less necessary to hold Malancourt except to bargain for the necessary price. The French soldiers fought desperately amid the ruins. When its fate was sealed, Pétain made no attempt to hold Haucourt behind it, but drew in his lines to a stronger position on the slopes of Hill 304, with the Forges brook and a treeless glen between them and the next German attack.

Again the German attack see-sawed to the other side of the Meuse, this time to renew the attack at Vaux. The movement began on March 31 with two of the searching or tentative assaults which proceeded no farther when the French were found to be strongly posted and alert. These attacks were followed by others increasing in intensity and weight, and one of them obtaining a hold on Vaux village, till, on Sunday, April 2, a big assault by a division was sent forward. It got up the steep roadway which leads between the Hardaumont and Caillette woods, and captured a good deal of the Caillette wood. It was a shrewd stroke. General Pétain could not afford to let it remain unanswered. He counter-attacked at once, and by the next day the French had thrown the Germans out of Caillette wood again at all but one point, had retaken the ravine, and at night got back to Vaux village once more. This was one of the most bitterly fought episodes in the long battle of Verdun. The Germans had paid heavily for Caillette wood. The French had to pay almost as heavily to win it back again.

Almost immediately afterwards the fight began again on the western side. Malancourt had been ceded. Haucourt the French defended only with artillery—a fact of which the Germans were not fully aware till they rushed the empty village—and Béthincourt evidently could not be much longer held without a greater sacrifice than it was worth. In the darkness of the night of April 7 its garrison was withdrawn, and the Germans entered it next day. The French line was now aligned from the redoubt in Avocourt wood along the north-western and northern slopes of Hill 304 to the Forges brook, thence south of Spur 265 and behind the Goose's Crest to the Meuse at Cumières. Its retirement to its new positions was made just in time to receive the shock of the heaviest attack which the Germans had made since the struggle of their Third Army Corps for Douaumont. On Friday, April 7, the French aviators reported a German concentration of not fewer than five divisions in the woods and behind the heights which run from Malancourt to Forges. They were massed for an attack which should test both Hill 304 and the Dead Man. Two divisions were to open out from the western woods on Hill 304; two other divisions were to strike from Crow's wood at the Dead Man; and each of these was to be supported by flanking

attacks—the first on Avocourt, the second, the eastern flank attack, on Cumières. To complete the picture, a feint attack was to be made at the Poivre Crest on the other bank.

The attack began on Saturday morning. The effort from the Avocourt wood was a fiasco from the outset. The French guns blew it back before it reached the French trenches. Next day the fight went on with the same intentions, in the same directions, and with much the same barrenness of result, and by Tuesday 11 it was clear that as a decisive assault the new German plan had failed. Ground had been won by them; they could saw their way very slowly into this or that side of the French defences, but they were powerless to

French Official Photograph

French Discipline under Shell-fire: infantry supporting the front line advancing in open order along an exposed roadway

It was followed, according to programme, by the direct attack from the Crow's wood on the Dead Man. The first attack withered. The flank attack towards Cumières had better luck at first, for it made its way from Regneville along the water meadows as far as the ruined houses of the village; but there it flickered out, and the survivors were destroyed. At the Dead Man the first futile attacks were followed by others, and at the close of the day a quarter of a mile of French front-line trenches was carried. bring about that collapse of them which alone could overwhelm the defenders in disaster. The great attack of the second week of April was not the end of the Battle of Verdun, but it was the end of any immediate stroke of strategy which was likely to alter the situation. The attacks were renewed. The French were to cede more ground under their pressure, and the ground lost was to be retroceded by counter-attack, but with the four-day battle, from April 8 to April 12, along the Avocourt-

Cumières front, the first stage of the battle of Verdun came to an end. It was after it that General Pétain published his memorable order of the day, thanking the 2nd Army for its past services, and promising it the same success in the future as when, on that "glorious day", the German assaults were shattered by the French guns. "On les aura," said the General, and the phrase was caught up by his men, who added to it the words: "Ils ne passeront pas."

E. S. G.

CHAPTER XV

THE SPRING CAMPAIGN ON THE BRITISH FRONT, 1916

British Help during the Battle of Verdun—Taking over the French Line south of Loos—The Shattered City of Arras—Ninety Miles of British Front—The Battle of the Craters at St. Eloi—A Chaplain's V.C.—Canadians' Ordeal at St. Eloi—Sir Max Aitken's Narrative—Gallant Shropshires on the Ypres-Langemarck Road—The Guards in the Ypres Salient—Round Loos and Hulluch—The Irish Troops' Reply to the Sinn Fein Rebellion—German Attacks to keep British in Check during the Battle of Verdun—Scottish Heroes of the Spring Campaign—Lancashire Grit in the Souchez Sector—The Gallant Twelfth Division—Supermen among the V.C.'s—Empire Day on the Western Front in 1916—Arrival of the Anzacs.

As soon as the German Crown Prince began thundering at the gates of Verdun Sir Douglas Haig stood ready and eager to co-operate at the first call for help from the French generalissimo, but the only assistance required by our indomitable Allies during the first half of 1916 was the relief of the French troops on their defensive front from south of Loos to beyond Arras, the old capital of Artois, as far as Hébuterne, where the line linked up with the British Army already on the Somme. "This relief", wrote Sir Douglas Haig in his first dispatch after succeeding Lord French at the front, "I was glad to be able to afford." It released for the defence of Verdun a large force of troops who were reckoned among the finest in the French Army—the men who had won the so-called "Labyrinth" and held the "accursed" heights of Notre Dame de Lorette and the Arras salient against repeated onslaughts of the enemy. The same sector included the battered villages of Souchez and Neuville St. Vaast, and the slopes of the Vimy ridge, which had witnessed some of the sternest fighting in the September offensive of the Allies in 1915. It also brought under British protection the shattered city of Arras, its great Renaissance Cathedral still standing, though bearing irreparable marks of ruthless bombardment. Shells had wrecked the dome, and great pillars lay shattered on the floorway of the nave when the British came to

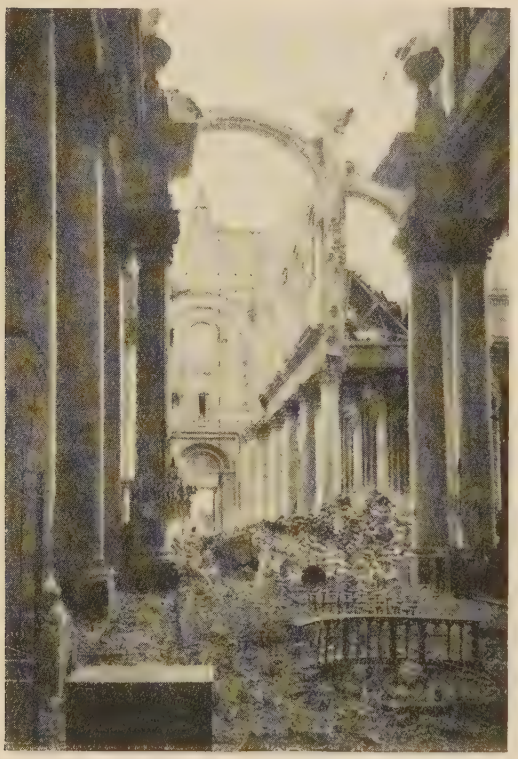
release the heroic defenders for the more pressing perils at Verdun.

"This old city of Artois", wrote the *Daily Chronicle* correspondent on visiting the place at this period, "is the most tragic of all the ruins where British soldiers stand on guard in this war of desolation. Ypres is pitiful—a white horror of broken life. But it is no more now than a rubbish heap of fallen masonry. Arras is not like that, for many of its streets are standing, and in every part of it one may see how fine and beautiful this city was in the old days of peace. The old Spanish houses in the Grande Place are not all destroyed. Public gardens, and long avenues of trees, are green with the first leaves of spring and flowers are thrusting up from the moist earth. The bastions of Vauban's old citadel are still high and strong. Arras may still be called a city, and some of its people are still living there, deep down in its vaults and cellars, from which they come up—these old women and young girls and white-faced children—to blink in the light of day, to listen intently to the great silence, and then to scuttle down again when something comes rushing through the sky, across the roofs, to tear a great hole in the ground or to crash through another roof."

Arras at the Time of the British Occupation: the ruins of the Hôtel de Ville

The Germans had already forced their way into the suburbs of St. Laurent and Blangy, but they were there held as firmly as round the larger salient of Ypres. The whole sector

was sacred ground to the troops who now handed it over to the care of their British Allies, but they knew that every yard which had been won by so much sacrifice would be jealously guarded by our men. The relief on such a considerable front, everywhere



View inside the shattered Renaissance Cathedral at Arras

in close touch with the enemy, was a delicate operation, but it was attended with complete success, thanks, as Sir Douglas Haig bears witness, to the cordial co-operation and goodwill of all ranks concerned, as well as to the lack of enterprise shown by the enemy while it was in progress. French appreciation of British assistance in the hour of need was shown in General Joffre's reply to Sir Douglas Haig's telegram of congratulation on the result of the first battle of Verdun. "The French Army", replied the generalissimo, "is confident that it will obtain results from which all the Allies will reap an advantage. It remembers also that its recent call on the comradeship of the British Army met with an immediate and complete response."

With this additional sector, linking up our troops at Loos with the 3rd British Army which had secretly taken over the French lines from below Arras to the Somme as long ago as August 1915—and kept out of the news as far as possible until the summer offensive of 1916—the British front, extending from just north of Ypres to Frise, now covered a distance in one unbroken line of, roughly, 90 miles. Gradually, therefore, by various extensions, it had added 60 miles of frontage in the course of twelve months. All along these 90 miles of British trenches no action was fought on a grand scale, such as that of Verdun, throughout the spring of 1916, but there were countless minor affairs, a great gathering of the clans from all parts of the empire, and a vast agglomeration of guns and munitions in preparation for the summer offensive in concert with the whole of the Allies on all the European fronts, a combined attack which the Germanic Powers attempted to forestall and frustrate by their sledge-hammer blows at Verdun and in the Trentino, and their feint attacks round Ypres, as well as by their desperate ventures in the North Sea and Ireland. That, however, is to anticipate. For the present we are only concerned with the spring cam-

paign on the British front, after the loss and recapture of The Bluff on the northern bank of the Ypres-Comines Canal, which brought to a satisfactory close the long winter campaign of 1915–16.

Of the numerous local actions which followed—many of them worthy of a special dispatch in any campaign before the Great World War, but now mere incidents dismissed at the time in a few brief lines — the next affair of outstanding importance was the battle for the craters at St. Eloi. This costly struggle began in brilliant fashion on March 27, 1916, when the Royal Fusiliers and Northumberland Fusiliers—the famous Fighting Fifth—straightened out the line at St. Eloi by cutting away the small German salient which encroached on the semicircle of our defences round Ypres to a depth of 100 yards over a front of some 600 yards. This salient, which included a mound that was a constant source of annoyance to us, together with the usual maze of trenches, entanglements, and fortifications, was first subjected to a series of six unusually large mines. So heavy was the charge that the simultaneous explosion shook the ground fully six miles away. One captured officer declared that two companies of his battalion in the first line had been blown to pieces. Tons of earth were flung hundreds of yards high, and in falling so choked the German communication trenches that many of the defenders were cut off from retreat when the Fusiliers, scarcely allowing time for the wreckage to settle, charged across to complete its work. Their attack was aimed at the German Second Line, and, on the right, was completely successful, the infantry swarming over

French Official Photograph

Preparing for an Allied Bombardment of the German Trenches: bringing a battery of heavy guns into position

the remaining wire and parapets, and finding the dazed defenders in little mood for serious opposition. The left attack, however, was less fortunate, a gap being left in possession of the Germans, who contrived thereby to capture and hold one of the craters caused by the mines. "The following days", writes Sir Douglas Haig, "were spent by both sides in heavy bombardment, intended on our part to capture the remaining trenches, and on the part of the Germans to drive us from the positions we had occupied."

Official Photograph issued by the Press Bureau

Captured from the Craters of St. Eloi: a group of prisoners—one wearing the German steel helmet—after the battle of March 27, 1916

It was not until the very early morning of April 3 that the outstanding crater was taken, this being followed by the capture of the last trenches held by the enemy in this obstinate salient. The whole of our objective had thus been secured, together with nearly 300 prisoners, including 10 officers. Our own losses, up to this point, were not serious. They would have been far heavier under the severe gruelling of the German gunnery but for the steel helmets, which had already proved their value along the whole length of the battle line. The appearance of the Fusiliers when they were relieved after earning the honours of the initial attack would have surprised their friends; "perhaps even shocked them", adds a *Morning Post* correspondent at the front:—

"They had no apparent reason for cheerfulness, but merry they were, though plainly tired out. They were disguised in mud from their boots to the crowns of their steel helmets. Their faces were swathed in ragged scarves, and the ironmongery on their heads was wrapped in canvas. They carried German helmets on their rifles, and shuffled along to absurd songs. They looked more like the veterans of Agincourt come to life again, and glad of it, than any likeness their homefolk could call to mind. And their eyes, though red-rimmed, were impudent and gay."

Other regiments of the same Division fought in the later and fiercer phases of this struggle for the St. Eloi salient down to April 3, when the whole position was won; and shared the honours of the fray a few weeks later when

a hollow square was drawn up behind the fighting lines, and twenty-two officers and men who had specially distinguished themselves received the ribbons of their various decorations, pinned on their breasts by the General of the Division. The last to be decorated was the Rev. Edward Noel Mellish, that "very gallant gentleman", as the General called him, who had won the Victoria Cross by risking his life over and over again in the recent fighting while rescuing the wounded from certain death. The *London Gazette* had already described how Mr. Mellish, who was a curate at St. Paul's, Deptford, before joining as temporary chaplain to the forces, went repeatedly backwards and forwards during the heavy fighting on three consecutive days between our original trenches and those captured from the enemy, in order to tend and rescue wounded men. Under continuous and heavy shell and machine-gun fire he brought in ten badly wounded men on the first day, seeming to bear a charmed life. On the second day the battalion to which he was attached was relieved, but he went back and brought in twelve more wounded men. On the night of the third day he took charge of a party of volunteers and once more returned to the trenches to rescue the remaining wounded. "This splendid work", adds the official record, "was quite voluntary on his part and outside the scope of his ordinary duties." No wonder the General called for three cheers for Mr. Mellish after reading out this record of magnificent gallantry and pinning the ribbon of the Victoria Cross on his breast. Evidently he found this ordeal harder

Official Photograph issued by the Press Bureau

Happy Warriors: officers and men of the Northumberland Fusiliers—the "Fighting Fifth"—photographed with their trophies immediately after their successful advance on March 27, 1916

to face than the German guns, for we are told that when left standing alone in the middle of that enthusiastic square, while his comrades cheered themselves hoarse, he blushed till he almost matched the new bit of crimson he was wearing. Mr. Mellish was the first "Fighting Parson" to win the Cross in the Great War. Only one other instance of the kind had hitherto been recorded in the annals of the decoration—that of the Rev. James W. Adams, who earned his Cross in the Afghan War of 1879.[1]

The hardest task in the St. Eloi salient, unfortunately, was still to come, for the waterlogged soil, the heavy, incessant shelling, and the destructive mine explosions made the work of consolidating our new position extremely difficult. Pumps were brought up under fire and strenuous efforts at draining instituted, but the utmost that the Brigade now holding the captured line could effect by the morning of April 5 was a reduction of water in the trenches by 2 feet. The men in possession at this time were the Canadians, who were on the immediate right of the Imperial Division when the salient was won, and whose artillery co-operated in the covering bombardment. Without sharing in the initial attack they had contributed indirectly to its success by their general activity and sending timely help to the advanced bombing posts on the eve of the final assault. When at length the British troops were engaged in consolidating the ground won, their commander sent the Canadians a warm message of thanks for their most valuable help.

Now the Canadians were themselves holding the captured salient, having relieved the battle-worn British troops

The Rev. Edward Noel Mellish, awarded the Victoria Cross for rescuing Wounded Men under Fire

in the new line on the night of April 2–3. As already mentioned, the new occupants worked with might and main to make the position secure. The original German line was marked only by the series of mine craters, the struggle for the possession of which increased in bitterness and intensity under fierce bursts of concentrated fire from German artillery which ploughed practically every yard of the demolished salient. The whole area was one con-

[1] Another Victoria Cross was to be won in the Great War some six months after Mr. Mellish's name had been added to the list. The hero on this occasion was the Rev. W. R. F. Addison, who, like Mr. Mellish, showed an utter disregard of personal danger in assisting the wounded under fire.

fused mass of shells, thousands upon thousands of them, great and small.

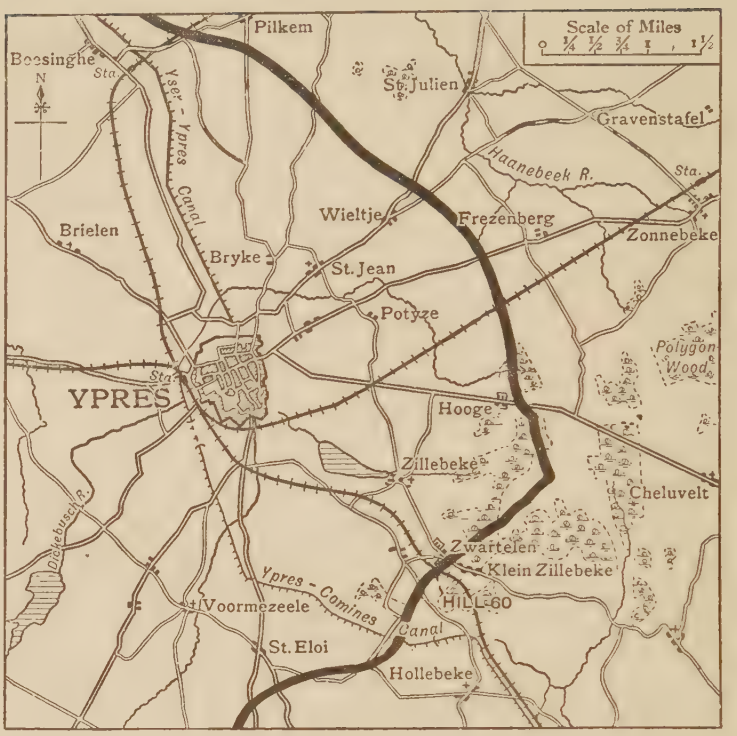
"The explosion of six British mines", writes Sir Max Aitken, the official Canadian chronicler, "had not only affected the German front line trench, but had yet further stirred up and churned the heavy soil still sodden with the winter rains. Trees had been smashed by the hail of shells and uprooted by their explosions. All signs of vegetation had disappeared. Of the former landscape there remained nothing but an ugly quagmire. Through this trackless morass of water-filled holes, mud and earth piles, in which at any step a man might sink over his waist, British troops had contrived to dig a narrow and shallow trench to the south of the craters, and Canadian troops had succeeded in linking up the British right with the main line."

Such trenches as existed were at least half full of water. Parapets were built up only to be demolished by the havoc of the shells. Day and night succeeded with very little improvement, and on April 5, when the enemy's bombardment increased in intensity, the new trenches practically ceased to exist. The climax was reached in the early hours of the following morning, when some companies of the Canadian battalions who had successfully held the advanced positions with dogged courage for three days and nights were being relieved. In the midst of this difficult operation the Germans, at 3 a.m., started a terrific bombardment which made all movement along the Canadians' front line an impossibility. Whole sections of the battered trench speedily disappeared.

"Here and there", writes Sir Max Aitken, "a dug-out on which no shell had fallen sheltered a few men, or the very shell holes which had blotted out some yards of the trench afforded insecure cover to others, but there was no continuity, no communication. Each group was isolated, thrown together on its own resources."

Meantime our own artillery had taken up the challenge, every available Canadian gun being turned on the German positions, helped by the British artillery both on its right and left. But in the dark hours before this bombardment the enemy had contrived to deploy a whole battalion of infantry opposite the Canadians' shattered line, and these troops, supported by another battalion, attacked at 3.30 a.m. There was practically nothing to stop them over the demolished trench. "Machine-guns had been smashed or buried, rifles were clogged with mud. The few men who in this or that isolated group still remained unwounded were hopelessly outnumbered." To the right and left of this gap in the Canadians' line, however, where the trenches and parapets had suffered less, a fierce resistance was offered. Sir Max Aitken describes how, despite the tremendous shelling and sweeping fire of hostile machine-guns, men climbed fearlessly on to the parapets and parados, the better to fire at the advancing foe, who, expecting to find all the front-line trenches unoccupied, advanced in fairly close formation. "Machine-guns were lifted into the open and worked with desperate courage until they became clogged with mud splashed on to them by exploding shells, or else were smashed or buried." Rallied by

Captain G. T. Gwynne and Lieutenant N. E. O'Brian—one of the officers to win the Military Cross in the cutting-out expedition which is described on page 140—men of the Canadian battalions hurled back the attack on the right and held their lines intact. The grim nature of the fighting a little farther to the east may be judged from the same writer's story of the adventures of Lieutenant Browne, of the French Canadians, who decimated the Germans with his machine-gun at close range, and continued to fire until his gun was put out of action:



Map showing the Scene of the Fighting at St. Eloi and the British Salient round Ypres in the Spring of 1916

"With his detachment of six men Lieutenant Browne then withdrew in the direction of our second line. On the way barbed wire was encountered. While crossing it the party was shot at by Germans who had interposed on the line of retreat. Four of the party were killed, but, having crossed the wire, Lieutenant Browne met a few more of our men who had been cut off from their trench, and with these reinforcements charged the point from which he had been fired at. Twelve Germans were found there, one of whom was an officer. All twelve were clubbed to death, the officer being attacked and killed by Private Simoneau. Lieutenant Browne eventually reached our trenches with his party. Of his original detachment of six there remained but two. Among the missing was Lance-corporal Lambert, who had already earned the D.C.M. and the Médaille Militaire."

Dawn on the 6th revealed a situation that was both dangerous and uncertain. Two of the craters were known to have been lost; several of the others were isolated and their fate was uncertain. Bombing parties, quickly organized, found the nearest still held by a Canadian detachment. The second was unoccupied, save by the dead bodies of the brave defenders, every man of the garrison having been killed. Captain Gwynne was still holding the Canadian line on the right, though the enemy had taken possession of the craters in his rear.

Bombed and shelled incessantly until all his remaining rifles were out of commission and his men exhausted, he finally decided, about noon, to retreat. "Word was sent through for the artillery to concentrate on the craters held by the enemy", writes Sir Max Aitken, and under cover of this fire, and of machine-gun and rifle fire from the Canadian trenches on his right, "he succeeded in withdrawing his men from an exceedingly difficult position". Major Daly, with three companies of a Canadian battalion, was still holding the line on the left, and on reinforcements arriving from another Canadian battalion he sent two platoons to occupy three of the craters shortly after dusk. Here the newcomers, under Captain Styles and Bidwell, entrenched themselves, and held on under a relentless torrent of German shells until the evening of April 8, when they were relieved. Major Daly was relieved at the same time, having held the trenches on the left of the craters, in the face of repeated infantry assaults and heavy bombardments, for four days and nights, besides commanding the surrounding positions with a courage and resource that never failed.

It is difficult, as Sir Douglas Haig observes in his dispatch, to follow in detail the fighting on the Canadian front during the next few weeks, the operations consisting of repeated attacks on both sides on mine craters still more or less isolated. The trenches running past this rent in the lines had been completely destroyed by shell fire. Four at least of the craters were still in the Canadians' hands on the night of April 10–11, when the defenders repulsed a determined assault on all four positions, as well as on some of the Canadian front-line trenches to left and right. Amid so much confusion, and unavoidable difficulty in maintaining communication with the garrisons of these advanced posts in the craters, considerable misconception appears to have existed as to the real state of affairs. It was reported to Sir Douglas Haig on the 11th, after the successful repulse of the last German onslaught, that we had recaptured all that remained of the position won by us on March 27 and April 3. This, however, was subsequently found to be incorrect, some of the new craters, it is presumed, having been mistaken for the old ones. The new craters, remaining exposed to the enemy's view and to the full weight of his artillery, proved at length untenable, and on May 16, when Sir Douglas Haig sent his first dispatch from General Headquarters, our troops were holding roughly the general line from which the Royal and Northumberland Fusiliers launched their successful attack on the salient on March 27.

The story will never be told of all the countless deeds of magnificent courage in this bitter struggle. Whole garrisons fell in defence of those abandoned craters, and the record of their valour died with them. Those who survived can only describe their experience as "a perfect hell". "You might be talking to a chum a few yards away from you", wrote one of them, "when you would feel a hot flash and the chap you were talking to had

Battle Screens on the Western Front: British troops charging through the clouds produced by smoke bombs

gone. Whether he was blown to pieces or not, God knows. You could only wonder if your turn would come next." Back in the old lines the Canadians still fought with an obstinate heroism and a dour determination to settle accounts with the Boches, who, on their side, concentrated the full force of their fury on the Dominion troops in this sector of their front—perhaps because the first anniversary occurred before the end of April of the memorable day on which the Canadians saved the situation in the first great gas attack at Langemarck, on the other side of the Ypres salient. This long ordeal of the trenches was graphically described by Sir Max Aitken, who, by the way, received the honour of a baronetcy in the King's Birthday Honours List of the following June.[1]

"Day after day, night after night, on the Canadian front, guns thunder and boom, their menacing rumble now swelling in gradual crescendo to the roar of bombardment, now dwindling in volume to an intermittent growl. There is little rest or security even in the rearward areas. Often the labour of weeks is undone in a single moment. Fortifications crumble, parapets collapse, buildings fall, and dug-outs cave in under the ruthless violence of explosive shells. Bursting shrapnel rains a vicious stream of bullets on trench, path, and field. Fixed rifle batteries and machine-guns sweep roads and approaches at uncertain intervals, and from points of vantage keen-eyed snipers watch patiently for the unwary. Under these conditions men have to live, hold the line, dig entrenchments, erect entanglements, carry up food and ammunition, and effect reliefs. For both sides it is approximately the same, and even in a week devoid of outstanding feature the toll of active siege warfare is heavy."

Just a year after the Canadians had proved their mettle in the Second Battle of Ypres, the King's Shropshire Light Infantry worthily celebrated the occasion by recapturing a position which had been taken from us on the night of April 19, 1916. For the Germans, still hammering in vain at the gates of Verdun, never ceased to keep the British busy round Ypres, constantly searching for a weak spot in the armour through which they might make a fatal thrust. Their capture of the trench on the Ypres-Langemarck road followed their fruitless efforts to push the Canadians farther back at St. Eloi, and was a shortlived triumph. Though the ground was a quagmire of mud, full of waterlogged craters and shell holes, so that men floundered in the dark up to their very armpits, the Shropshires struggled on in their desperate venture through a storm of rain on that Good Friday night of April 21–2 with an invincible valour which well earned for their regiment the rare mention of its name in the official daily report from British Headquarters. It took them two hours to cross the 200 yards to the German lines. To prevent themselves from sinking in the quagmire these gallant Shropshires lay almost flat on the mud, pushing themselves along practically with hands and knees, or using their rifles as poles to support them in the slime.

[1] Sir (William) Maxwell Aitken, the son of a Scottish minister at New Brunswick, was the Unionist member for Ashton-under-Lyne, as well as official Canadian Representative at the Front. His valuable services in connection with the war were many and various.

"A few" (wrote Mr. Philip Gibbs in the *Daily Telegraph*) "fell into shell craters and were drowned. Some were so caught and stuck by the mud that they could not get free nor move a yard. The assaulting companies, all struggling like this, lost touch with each other in the darkness, but pressed forward independently to their objectives. The men on the right, or as many as could keep together, rushed the enemy's trench at about half-past one in the morning, and took possession of a portion of it in spite of heavy rifle, grenade, and machine-gun fire from the enemy's support trenches. Bombing parties worked up farther and established posts, but could find no sign of the men who had been advancing with them on the left. At first it seemed as though the men here were alone in the enemy's lines, but later cheering was heard, which showed that the centre of the assault had reached the goal through the quagmire behind. These Shropshire lads in the centre had been through fire and water. As soon as they left their position they became exposed to a hail of rifle bullets, and their captain fell wounded. Several men dropped. Through the darkness came cries for help from men up to their waists in shell craters, hurt. But the others pressed on and jumped into the trench. A few Germans attempted resistance, and were bayoneted or shot, and others fled."

Then came the hurried work of consolidation before the inevitable counter-attack, and the settling of accounts over the few points still held by the enemy; but the work was well done in all respects, and when dawn came the counter-attack was hurled back without difficulty. The Shropshires had not only retaken the lost trench, but had also held it; and no finer feat was chronicled throughout the spring campaign of 1916. It was marked by many individual acts of extraordinary bravery, not the least astonishing of which was that of the officer, struck by a piece of shell, who led his men to the assault with one of his arms hanging merely by a thread. The Colonel, unhappily, was killed, and all ranks suffered severely; but the British line, to quote from the brief record in the official report, was "completely re-established".

Not far away was the Guards Division, which went into the Ypres salient in the spring of this year, after its turn in the trenches by Neuve Chapelle. The Guards came in for the usual strafing from the enemy's guns, but no serious infantry attack was attempted against their line at this period, save at Wieltje, between Ypres and St. Julien, where a raiding party, after a preliminary pounding with heavy guns on April 19, broke into a trench in front of the Scots Guards. They were not there long. Several resourceful officers soon had the matter well in hand, and helped to chase the raiders back to their lines.

For the next noteworthy incident along the British front the scene shifts to the dreary field of Loos, where the endless battle was still raging round such vital points as the Hohenzollern Redoubt, the Quarries, and Hulluch. Here, in the hour of loyal Ireland's anguish, when Dublin was in the throes of the Sinn Fein rebellion, the Germans chose to make an attack on the 16th Irish Division, holding the British line between Hulluch and Vermelles. They had already insulted the Munsters and other Irish regiments by hoisting placards announcing the pitiful outbreak in Dublin as a

national revolution, and calling on the troops to desert the British lines. A letter to Mr. John Redmond from his brother, Mr. William Redmond, while serving with one of the Irish regiments at the front, relates how the Irishmen responded:—

"The Germans in the trenches opposite certain Irish regiments", he writes, "put up the following notices: 1. 'Irishmen! In Ireland revolution. English guns are firing on your wives and children. The English Military Bill has been refused. Sir Roger Casement is being persecuted. Throw away your arms. We give you a hearty welcome.' 2. 'We are Saxons. If you don't fire, we won't.' 3. 'Irishmen! Heavy uproar in Ireland. English guns are firing on your wives and children.' The Irishmen replied by singing Irish airs and 'Rule, Britannia!' to the accompaniment of mouth-organs and melodeons."

The Munsters at one point determined to avenge the insult by capturing the placards, two officers with twenty-five men crawling out after dark towards the enemy's trenches for that purpose. All went well for a time. They cut their own wire, and crawled stealthily half-way across No Man's Land; but were then discovered by the German search-lights. Machine-guns were immediately trained in their direction. Some were hit. All lay perfectly still for hours. Then, gradually, they resumed their perilous mission; cut through the enemy's wire entanglements, and leapt in the dark among the astounded Germans, who promptly turned and fled. It was not long before the placards were in the Irishmen's hands and borne back in triumph to their trenches, bearing marks of the bullets to which they had already been subjected even before the raid was decided on. They were sent to London for safe custody, to form part in due course of the regiment's collection of war trophies.

Perhaps it was in revenge for this ungrateful conduct after all their benevolent planning and scheming on Ireland's behalf that the Germans chose the Irish lines for their gas attack at dawn on April 27 in the same neighbourhood. Unluckily for themselves they picked out battalions of the Royal Irish and Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, regiments which had won undying honour not only on the fields of France and Flanders, but also in Gallipoli and the Balkans. With such inspiring records behind them, the two battalions of these famous regiments in the 16th Irish Division (Second New Army) now winning their spurs side by side in the trenches near Hulluch, were not likely to fail. Nor did they. The poison gas came pouring thickly and suddenly into their trenches at daybreak, but the Irishmen were ready for it, as well as for the infantry assault, while the enemy's artillery cut them off by a "barrage", or curtain, of lachrymatory and other shells extending for a considerable distance over the support and reserve lines. The infantry attack did not mature until after an unaccountable delay of some two hours, and a further discharge of gas. On the right it crumpled up at once under the Irishmen's annihilating fire. Only a few survivors returned unwounded to their trenches. On the left, where the enemy's concentrated artillery fire had

Drawn by S. Begg from an Official Photograph

While the Sinn Feiners were rebelling in Ireland: Captain William Redmond, M.P., brother of Mr. John Redmond, leading Irish troops at the Front

"Is it not an additional horror, said the Irish leader, Mr. John Redmond, "that on the very day when we hear that men of the Dublin Fusiliers have been killed by Irishmen in the streets of Dublin, we receive the news of how the men of the 16th Division—our own Irish Brigade, and of the same Dublin Fusiliers—had dashed forward and by their unconquerable bravery retaken the trenches that the Germans had won at Hulluch?"

pounded the trench and parapets to pieces, he succeeded for a time in hurling himself through the gap, but only for a time. A counter-attack was immediately organized, and within half an hour the only live Germans in the British trenches were either wounded or prisoners.

A similar attack in the same region was made two days later, and was equally unsuccessful. On this occasion, after formidable preliminaries, only a small assault was attempted, and was easily repulsed. "The more serious advance which appears to have been intended", writes Sir Douglas Haig, "was probably rendered impossible by the fact that a part of the enemy's gas broke back over his own lines, to the visible confusion of his troops, who were massing for the attack." Their losses both from this cause and our artillery must have been considerable, judging from the number of ambulances seen coming up to Hulluch. Behind the enemy's line the ground was found to be coloured by gas on a front of about 1000 yards to a depth of some 3000 yards.

On the same night the Germans carried out another gas attack, this time on a more considerable scale, north of the Messines-Wulverghem road. The poisonous fumes were liberated about 1 a.m. on a front of 3500 yards, under cover of heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. Immediately afterwards a heavy barrage of artillery fire was placed on three parts of this area, and no fewer than eight infantry assaults were launched.

"Of these attacks", writes Sir Douglas Haig, "only two penetrated our trenches; one was immediately repelled, while the other was driven out by a counter-attack after about forty minutes' occupation. The enemy's object would appear to have been the destruction of mine shafts, as a charge of gun-cotton was found unexploded in a disused shaft, to which the enemy had penetrated. But if this was his object he was completely unsuccessful."

Whatever his immediate aim, it is probable that the real motive of all this renewed activity on the British front was to prevent us from sending any further assistance to the French. His feint attacks earlier in the year had failed to stop us from liberating the fine French army from its battle-ground in Artois for service at Verdun, but the fate of Verdun was still hanging in the balance, and the German policy was to keep the British in check at all costs. Every day, therefore, saw angry duels between the rival guns, with heavy bombardments threatening infantry attacks at various points along the 90 miles of British front. Their only success in the assaults which matured during the first half of May was in the desolate region north-east of Vermelles, where another heavy attack was launched during the night of the 11th–12th by some Palatinate battalions over the mangled ground near the Hohenzollern Redoubt. Here our lines had been pounded to shapelessness by a preliminary bombardment of appalling intensity, and in the confusion and darkness of the German onslaught some 500 yards of our front trenches were lost. A counter-attack was immediately organized by our bombers in the support trenches, and a terrific fight

From an Official Photograph

Preparing to Attack: Irish troops in action on the Western Front

ensued in which a portion of the ground was regained.

Meantime our own troops were equally active in punishing the enemy at various points, particularly distinguishing themselves in daring bombing exploits and night raids on the enemy's trenches. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers were mentioned for a highly successful expedition of this description just north of Thiepval Wood on the night of May 7–8, and the Royal Inniskillings for a similar affair near Fromelles, where the Germans, to their cost, were found crowded together in their trenches, and driven out with heavy losses before the Irishmen had completed their work. The fortunes of war presently brought the local storm centre back to "Plug Street" on the night of May 13–15, when three parties of the enemy attacked our lines at separate points south-east of the Wood. They prepared the way with two heavy bombardments of artillery fire by guns of every calibre, and in the infantry attack which followed one party succeeded in entering our trenches. Immediately afterwards, however, it was ejected by our bombers, "leaving behind", adds the official *communiqué*, "ten dead Germans". The other parties, who, like the first, expected to find the trenches lifeless after the shattering bombardment to which they had been so freely subjected, met the surprise of their

lives on nearing the British lines, for they were met by our Scottish troops on the parapet and dispersed in disorder.

Some day the full story will be told of the part played in Armageddon by each part of the British Isles—England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales—but in the midst of the war, with all its carefully guarded secrets, and its increasing ramifications all over the world, it was impossible to identify the different units in most of these engagements. They were never singled out for mention at the time, save in very special circumstances. Only in the Honours Lists of the *London Gazette*, some months later, was recognition given to individual valour; and presently these lists omitted all dates and scenes of action, so that it became more difficult than ever to piece the scattered fragments of official news into a complete and authoritative picture of the operations in any sector of the British front. Press correspondents were gradually accorded more and more licence, and in the days of decisive engagements filled their papers with vivid pen pictures, red-hot as it were, from the battle-field; but all their pictures were necessarily drawn from hearsay, amid the turmoil of the army behind the fighting line, and, when re-read months later in the cold light of the full official dispatches, were only occasionally of real value for historical purposes. The records of many of the bravest deeds were buried in the supplementary pages of the *Gazette*, and save where the regiments, as already mentioned, were singled out for special mention in the daily reports from Head-quarters, the units engaged were rarely mentioned. The Scottish troops again won this distinction on the night of May 16–17, when two raiding parties of the Seaforth Highlanders, entering the enemy's trenches at Roclincourt, between Neuville St. Vaast and Arras, killed a number of the enemy who were on guard, and successfully bombed three dug-outs full of other Germans. The Seaforths' casualties, added Sir Douglas Haig, were slight, and the whole of the raiding parties got back to our trenches.

The Seaforths earned their share of the decorations awarded during this period. Among the most notable of them may be recorded the Military Crosses won by Lieutenant E. A. Mackintosh for his skill and gallantry in organizing and leading a successful raid on the enemy's trenches, when he brought back two wounded men under heavy fire; Second-Lieutenant Thomas Milne, who led a party of bombers with the coolest courage until he was wounded, and by his personal example did much to ensure the success attained; and Second-Lieutenant A. Gordon Cross, the story of whose brilliant adventures, baldly though it is told in the official records, stirs the imagination like a page of fiction:—

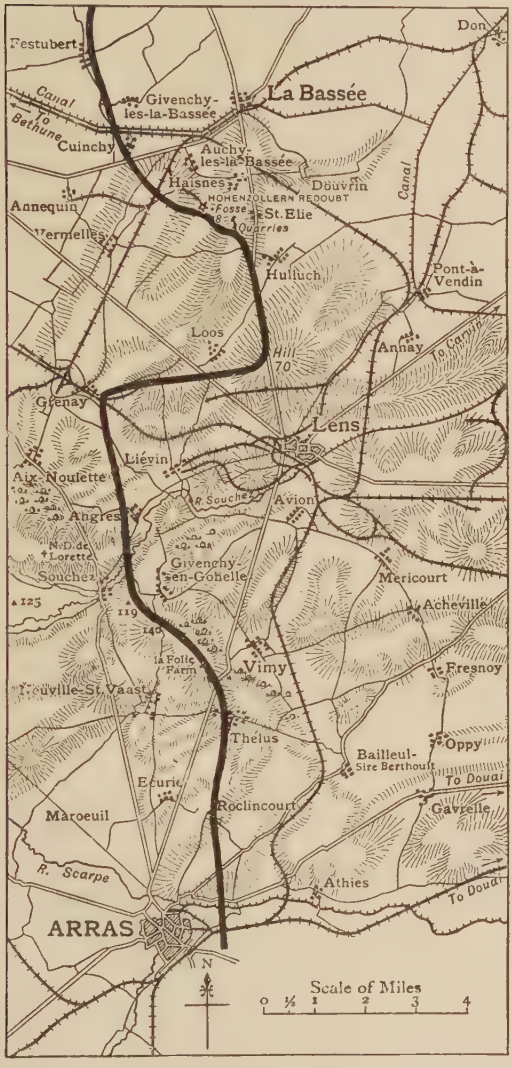
"After the explosion of a series of enemy mines Second-Lieutenant Cross rushed forward, but fell into a crater, where he was attacked by five of the enemy. He was hit on the head, but managed to shoot two with his revolver. Finally his captors left him, to assist one of their own officers, and he got back. He then took part in a bombing attack which drove the enemy off."

A fool, as Mr. Kipling would say, would have tried to describe that. Run through these Honours Lists and you will find all the famous Scottish regiments represented by similar acts of individual gallantry during these months of trench warfare before the great offensive of the coming July. Sometimes it is for a splendid piece of rescue work at the bottom of a mine shaft, as in the case of Lieutenant H. J. Humphreys, attached to a company of the Royal Engineers from the Black Watch; sometimes it is for fine and gallant work in the air, as in the case of Second-Lieutenant Lord Doune, of the Scottish Horse (T.F.) and Royal Flying Corps, who, with Second-Lieutenant Walker as gunner, dived towards one of the vaunted Fokkers flying some 1000 feet below, and after a thrilling chase brought it down behind the British lines; but chiefly it is for the dogged everyday courage of the trenches, the bloody work of raiding parties, the reckless daring of patrol duty, or the devoted bravery of rescue parties in No Man's Land. One other instance of Scottish pluck during this period may be mentioned as illustrating the work of the Machine Gun Corps.

The hero on this occasion was Second-Lieutenant J. Reid M'Gregor, attached to a company of the M.G.C. from the Gordon Highlanders, who won the Military Cross for the intrepid manner in which he beat off a German attack. The enemy had taken in their wire and made a gap preparatory to their advance. Thereupon Second-Lieutenant M'Gregor trained his guns on the gap. One gun he mounted in a commanding but exposed position, and during the heavy bombardment presently begun by the enemy he went to see how matters stood. He found all the team killed or wounded, but, nothing daunted, worked the gun single-handed under intense fire and kept the Germans back.

What has been written of the Scottish regiments applies equally to the fighting ranks of England, Ireland, and Wales. All were wringing a reluctant but unmistakable respect from the Germans for the prowess of the new British army. It was during the month of May, 1916, that the Lancashire men convinced the enemy of the fact that the readjustment of the Allies' line in Artois threatened danger to his vital positions on the Vimy heights, where Prince Rupert of Bavaria guarded the southern approach to Lens. With every advantage of ground the enemy had steadily strengthened his hold since the French fought with the noblest heroism and self-sacrifice for the same commanding ridge in the September offensive of 1915. Their magnificent efforts, though near to being crowned with a brilliant success, left the Germans still in possession of the heights, and the British victory at Loos, threatening Lens from the north, consequently missed the great strategical result which had been hoped for from that combined advance. Thenceforward the Germans had literally left no stone unturned in their ceaseless efforts to make the Allies' line untenable. For weeks before the Lancashires' opportunity

came the enemy had made life unbearable in the region of La Folie farm, south-west of Givenchy-en-Gohelle, by his possession of two

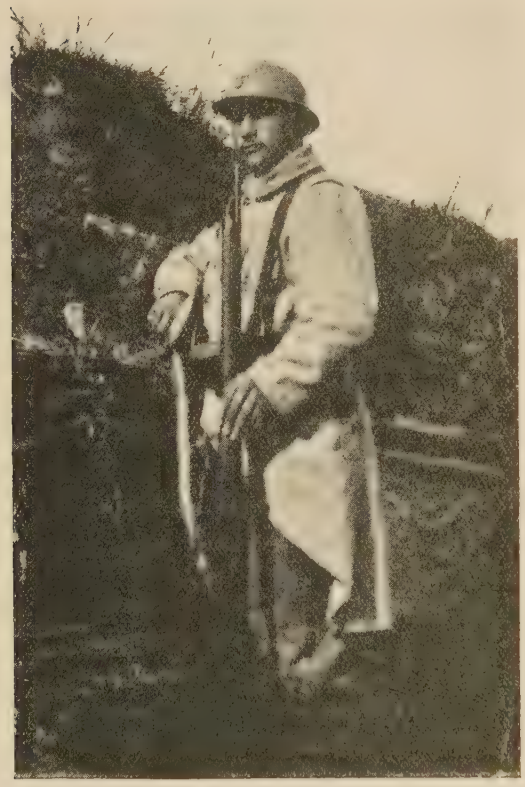


Map showing approximately the British line in Artois in the Spring of 1916, after the relief of the French army south of Loos by Sir Douglas Haig during the Battle of Verdun

groups of mine craters, from the lips of which he could keep close watch on the British trenches and dominate them with his artillery fire. To the Lancashires fell the task of removing this nuisance.

The way was prepared by a series of counter-mines laid from the British trenches some 50 to 100 yards below each group of craters, which were separated by a space of about 40 yards of open ground. Everything went like clockwork on the night of the assault. This, fortunately, had succeeded forty-eight hours of wet and cloudy weather, hindering the enemy's observation. The prelude to the affair was the bombardment of the German trenches by the British "heavies", which sent the Germans scuttling into their deep dug-outs. Then, at 8.30 p.m., just as the guns lifted, came the crashing explosion of the mines under the group of craters facing the British left, three in number, followed by a volcanic upheaval in which earth and smoke and fragments of men were flung in one horrible mound high into the air. Scarcely had the debris settled when the Loyal North Lancashires, holding the British line facing this position, sprang from their trench and were taking possession of the new craters which had rendered the old ones useless. On their extreme left one of the German craters—the one nearest to the British line—had not been blown up, but was carried by assault without much opposition from men who had been momentarily expecting to share the fate of their hoisted comrades. This fate overtook the Germans holding the right-hand group precisely ten seconds after the first explosion, and was immediately followed by a resolute assault by the Lancashire Fusiliers, who, sweep-

ing across the intervening space of open ground before the German reinforcements of men and bombs could get there, seized the lips of the new craters and kept the enemy back. Beautifully organized, and led with consummate coolness and courage, these Lancashire battalions soon had the edge of the craters joined up and the whole position consolidated, notwithstanding the furious rifle fire and shower of bombs poured into the captured ground. Our losses had not been light, and were heavier still in the sterner task of holding our gains in the face of the mass of German artillery now concentrated on the spot; but the enemy's casualties were far greater. The most trying ordeal to the Lancashires in the captured craters was the agonizing cry of the Germans who had been buried in the dug-outs to which they had fled, in accordance with their usual practice, when the British bombardment began. Their frantic shouts from the lower darkness rose above the tumult, but it was impossible to dig them out while the Germans were doing their best to pound the place to pieces. Some of our bombers, ceasing fire, shouted to the enemy within hearing distance offering an informal truce to enable him to rescue his wounded; but the only response was another storm of bombs, and a more desperate struggle than ever. Possibly, of course, the proposal was misunderstood.



French Poilu in the Steel Helmet worn by the French Army

The German steel helmet is shown on p. 250, and the British on pp. 251 and 267.

Next morning found the Lancashires firmly installed in their new position, their total gain extending in length over some 350 yards. Not only had the several craters been linked up, but the intervening gap between the two groups had been trenched, communication trenches had been dug from the old line, bombing posts had been established, and machine-guns were ready to defend all the strategic points. Lancashire had further reason to be proud of her sons for that night's work. Though the fighting men had, as usual, been simply splendid, the working parties who had followed up their assault were not less heroic.

"They did amazing things," wrote Mr. Philip Gibbs in the *Daily Telegraph*, "toiling in the darkness under abominable shell-

fire, and their labour was life-saving. By daylight they had built communication trenches with ample head cover from the crater lips to our front-line trenches, so that the chiefs and supplies can go up to shelter. It was a superb achievement, and as fine as anything in this war. It is a song of the spade which should be put into a ballad to be learnt by heart."

Alas! it was not destined long to remain a song of triumph. The enemy, fully alive to the danger of this new development, brought up an immense accumulation of artillery, and, concentrating an appalling fire on the position, proceeded systematically to smash it to bits. Trench mortars, machine-guns, rifle grenades, and the like joined in with the "heavies", and were replied to in kind; and presently it became all too clear that the gain had been too isolated to stand the strain of such an intense and incessant bombardment. The Lancashire men in possession held on grimly, but were unable, two days later, to prevent the Germans from recovering one of the captured craters, when their infantry advanced in crushing numbers under a dense curtain of fire, and after a prolonged period of heavy artillery fire. The gallant recapture of this crater in another two days by the Loyal North Lancashires drove the Germans to desperation. They determined to win back their old advantage of position at all costs. A more formidable assault than ever was therefore delivered by them on Sunday, May 21, after what was described at the time as the most highly concentrated artillery attack in the Souchez area since the September Offensive of 1915. The bombardment, which lasted from the early hours of the morning, grew to extreme intensity in the afternoon, by which time it was estimated that the enemy had massed on this small front no fewer than 100 batteries. For four solid hours his guns rained shells without ceasing. No trenches, as we had repeatedly proved in similar attacks on our own side, could remain tenable

One of the British Steel Helmets

under such a destructive storm of heavy fire; and so it was in the present case. When the terrific bombardment ceased, much of our front trenches in this battered sector had been quite obliterated, and the German infantry, advancing immediately afterwards through our barrage of fire and clouds of smoke, were able to penetrate our line on a front of about 1500 yards. Sir Douglas Haig reported that the depth of penetration varied from 100 to 300 yards. Our own artillery retaliated by subjecting the lost posi-

tions to heavy punishment, and, since our guns had the range to a nicety, and our bombers were full of fight, the enemy paid dearly for a success which he made no attempt to expand. It had to be confessed, however, that he had robbed us of a promising foothold and regained his advantage of position on the crest of the Vimy ridge. It was disappointing, but ebb and flow had ever been the course of the struggle since the French first tried to oust the enemy from the same fearsome heights.

Some of the proudest honours fell to Lancashire men during the early months of 1916. Before the battle of the craters just described, one of the Loyal North Lancashires, Private Henry Kenny, earned the Victoria Cross for heroic rescue work between the lines, going out not once but on six different occasions in a single day under heavy shell, rifle, and machine-gun fire. Each time he succeeded in carrying to a place of safety a wounded man who had been lying in the open. Private Kenny was himself wounded in the neck while handing the last man over the parapet. In the later struggles for one of the craters captured by the Loyal North Lancashires another Victoria Cross was won by Lieutenant Richard B. B. Jones, an old Dulwich College boy, who had left school for the army in September 1914. He was holding the crater with his platoon of Loyal North Lancashires when it was isolated by a heavy barrage of fire on our trenches, and the enemy, after exploding a mine forty yards to the right, attacked it in overwhelming numbers.

"Lieutenant Jones kept his men together, steadying them by his fine example, and shot no less than fifteen of the enemy as they advanced, counting them aloud as he did so to cheer his men. When his ammunition was expended he took a bomb, but was shot through the head while getting up to throw it. His splendid courage had so encouraged his men that when they had no more ammunition or bombs they threw stones and ammunition boxes at the enemy till only nine of the platoon were left. Finally they were compelled to retire."

Lieutenant Richard Basil B. Jones, one of the Victoria Cross heroes of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment

In an earlier crater fight, in which the Royal Lancashires were concerned, the Victoria Cross was won by Private Harry Christian, who was holding the crater with five or six men in front of our trenches.

"The enemy", again to quote from the *London Gazette*, "commenced a very heavy bombardment of the position with heavy 'minenwerfer' bombs, forcing a temporary withdrawal. When he found that three men were missing, Private Christian at once returned alone to the crater, and, although bombs were continually bursting actually on the edge of the crater, he found, dug out, and carried one by one into safety all three men, thereby undoubtedly saving their lives. Later, he placed himself where he could see the bombs coming, and directed his comrades when and where to seek cover."

In the same month was awarded another Victoria Cross for an exhibition of almost superhuman endurance by one of the East Kents—the famous fighting Buffs, who claim to be the oldest regiment in the army, and lived up to their finest traditions in the Great World War. Their hero on this occasion was Corporal William R. Cotter, of a battalion which formed part of that gallant 12th Division which fought so splendidly on the foul battle-field of Hulluch and the Hohenzollern, but was so little heard of in the official dispatches. The Twelfth formed part of the First Hundred Thousand — the Eastern Division; young stalwarts of the Home Counties, Kent and Surrey, Sussex and Wessex, Middlesex and Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, and the shires of Bedford, Gloucester, and Somerset. They had proved their mettle at "Plug Street" before being thrown into the furnace at Loos, where they lost their commander, General Wing, and his A.D.C., besides many other of their bravest and best, in the hideous maze of earthworks and craters which stretched from La Bassée Canal to Loos. For the most part their glorious deeds passed unrecorded, but time will prove how nobly they bore more than their share of the never-ending battle which throughout the autumn and winter of 1915–6 turned this desolate region into one vast, appalling graveyard.

It was in the month of March, on the night of Monday, the 6th, that Corporal Cotter, of the Buffs, showed to what supreme heights the valour and fortitude of this heroic fighting stock could attain. In the attack on an enemy trench on the night in question, Cotter's bombing party was cut off, and so hard pressed in a crater that he went back to report, and obtain more bombs. He was returning when his right leg was blown off at the knee, and he was also wounded in both arms, but, nothing dismayed, he somehow made his way back to the crater, steadied the men who were holding it, and altered the dispositions of the defenders to meet a fresh counter-attack of the enemy.

"For two hours", adds the *Gazette*, "he held his position, and only allowed his wounds to be dressed when the attack had quieted down. He could not be moved back for fourteen hours, and during all this time had a cheery word for all who passed him. There is no doubt that his magnificent courage helped greatly to save a critical situation."

Alas! he was too terribly wounded to reap the reward of his heroism, dying on March 14 in hospital in France, a fortnight before his name appeared in the next list of V.C.'s. In the same list was recorded a similar act of almost superhuman valour

and endurance, performed by Captain Arthur F. Gordon Kilby, of the South Staffords, who, selected at his own request, on account of the gallantry which he had displayed on many previous occasions, led an attack with his company on a strong enemy redoubt.

"The company charged along the narrow towpath, headed by Captain Kilby, who, though wounded at the outset, continued to lead his men right up to the enemy wire under a devastating machine-gun fire and a shower of bombs. Here he was shot down, but, although his foot had been blown off, he continued to cheer on his men and to use a rifle. Captain Kilby has been missing since the date of the performance of this great act of valour, and his death has now to be presumed."

French Official Photograph

"Kamerads!": German prisoners employed to clean one of their captors' "75" guns

There were two other V.C.'s in this list of heroes, and their deeds were equally typical of the fighting spirit of our New Armies in the unparalleled horrors of modern warfare. The first was awarded to Lieutenant Eric A. M'Nair, of the Royal Sussex, who was holding part of the front line when the enemy exploded a mine right under him. Lieutenant M'Nair and many men of two platoons were hurled with the wreckage into the air. Not a few of their comrades were buried. The enemy at once launched its infantry to seize the crater formed by the explosion, but the lieutenant, though much shaken, had immediately organized a party with a machine-gun to man the near edge, and was ready for the assault. Opening rapid fire on the enemy, who was advancing in force, he first checked and then drove the Germans back, leaving many dead behind them. Lieutenant M'Nair then ran back for reinforcements—for the danger was by no means over—and sent to another unit for bombs, ammunition, and tools to replace those buried. The communication trenches

were blocked by the wreckage, but, taking his life in his hands, he went across the open under heavy fire and led back the reinforcements in the same fearless way. "His prompt and plucky action and example", adds the *Gazette*, "undoubtedly saved the situation." The other Victoria Cross was won by Sergeant A. F. Saunders, of the Suffolks, in a costly attack on the enemy's trenches.

"When his officer", to quote from the official record, "had been wounded in the attack he took charge of two machine-guns and a few men, and, although severely wounded in the thigh, closely followed the last four charges of another battalion, and rendered every possible support. Later, when the remains of the battalion which he had been supporting had been forced to retire, he stuck to one of his guns, continued to give clear orders, and by continuous firing did his best to cover the retirement."

The late Captain Arthur F. Gordon Kilby, South Staffordshire Regiment, who won the Victoria Cross after his foot had been blown off (see p. 270)

To all these new and war-worn armies from the British Isles, with their gallant Canadian comrades and the Indian cavalry, came, in the spring of 1916, the fighting men from the rest of the British Empire: the Anzacs who had already won immortal glory on the heights of Gallipoli; South Africans who, having beaten the Germans in South-West Africa, were eager to fight them on European soil; Newfoundlanders who had won their spurs in the closing acts of the Gallipoli drama; Ceylon planters; men from the Straits Settlements; and others who had travelled many thousands of miles for the privilege of fighting for freedom and the Empire in the decisive theatre of war. Thus Empire Day of 1916 found representatives of every part of His Majesty's Dominions fighting side by side on the battle fields of France and Flanders, "bound together", as Sir Douglas Haig said in a stirring message to the different parts of the Empire, "not only by ties of blood, but by similarity of ideals and loyalty to one Crown and one Flag . . . united heart and soul in this great fight for freedom and justice—the old watchwords of our race". To the King Sir Douglas Haig al o sent the following telegram:—

"On Empire Day, on behalf of your Majesty's armies now in France, representative of every part of your Majesty's Dominions, I respectfully submit the assurance of our loyal devotion to your Majesty and to the principles of freedom and justice which are symbolized for us by the Crown and flag of the British Empire."

His Majesty replied as follows:—

"I warmly appreciate the assurances of loyal devotion which you send me to-day in the name of the armies of the British Empire serving under your command. Tell them with what pride and interest I follow their fortunes and of my confidence that success will crown their efforts. May the comradeship of the battle-field knit still closer together the peoples of the Dominions and Mother Country in the age of peace which, please God, will be the fruit of this long and arduous war.

"GEORGE, R.I."

General Joffre and our Men from the Southern Cross: Australasian troops—shown on the opposite page—marching past the French Generalissimo after their arrival on the Western Front

The new Dominion troops had then been long enough in France to make their presence felt on the fighting front, though the time had not yet arrived for a great offensive. Nearly half of the New Zealanders and Australians had seen service in Gallipoli, the strength of the various units having afterwards been made up by reinforcements from Australasia, whose training had been completed in Egypt. Thanks to the Navy they had been safely transported from Egypt, their only casualties being due to the overturning of a motor omnibus by the Suez Canal, where one man was drowned. Bases were established both at Marseilles and Havre, though the principal base was in the Mother Country. There was no demonstration for the Anzacs when they first arrived at Marseilles, for the troops, kept on board during the daylight hours, were landed at night, and only those inhabitants who were woken up by the strains of the band as the

men marched through the deserted streets knew that fresh troops were on the road. They threw the new-comers a passing cheer without realizing who they were. But later, when they knew, and when all the British troops at Marseilles assembled for a grand review, the Empire troops were accorded a tremendous and joyous welcome by the enthusiastic population. Four squadrons of Indian Lancers led the march past, followed by Anzacs, South Africans, and detachments of Scottish troops. General Joffre afterwards saw some of the Anzacs at the front, and it was no mere figure of speech that he afterwards employed on Empire Day when he telegraphed the sentiments of high esteem and cordial comradeship entertained by the French armies "for the valiant troops of the Dominions, India, and the Colonies, whom they admire for their fine conduct and brilliant feats of arms on all the battle-fields on which they have fought". When, after the tedious period of waiting necessary for the organization of lines of communication and bases, and the final training of recruits in trench warfare behind the lines, the Australian and New Zealand troops finally took over a portion of the front, they stepped into their allotted places alongside the divisions from the Motherland with the coolness and efficiency of seasoned warriors, who, having passed through the great adventure of Gallipoli, knew how to play the great game as well as anyone. They found the bombard-

From Gallipoli to the French Front: "Anzacs" marching past General Joffre, who appears in the left-hand portion of the photograph shown on the opposite page

ments and all the contrivances of modern warfare that the Germans had developed with such foul ingenuity worse than anything of the kind that they had to endure from the Turks; and the physical drawbacks in the trenches were harder to bear than the scorching sun and dreary isolation of Egypt; but of the three evils most of them apparently considered the Western front the least. They tasted poison gas for the first time, for the Turks had left this noxious weapon to their more cultured masters; but the Australians and New Zealanders had come well prepared.

"Our men", wrote Mr. Malcolm Ross, the official war correspondent with the New Zealand Force, "had already been supplied with gas helmets, and there were double flaps to the dug-out doors, to help to defeat one of the most devilish phases of modern warfare that the Boche has invented. But gas attacks do not profit the enemy much in these days. The most recent helmets invented by the British seem to give an almost perfect immunity from gas attacks."

Here in France, too, the Anzacs were at least in the main theatre; not in a side-show. And the spring rains, which flooded their trenches and chilled them to the marrow—coming as they had done straight from the blazing sands of Egypt—were not so hateful as the parching thirst of Gallipoli. "It's a thousand times better to have too much water", as one of them said, "than too little." Always, too, there was the joy of a real rest to look forward to in the billeting areas behind the lines. In Gallipoli the fighting front, save in the critical moments of attack, was often the safest part of the Anzacs' restricted

A French Welcome for the Australasians: decorated Dominion troops at Marseilles

theatre. No patch of ground was really safe at all. Here in France, however, was a background of green woodlands and friendly villages, where the Anzacs made themselves thoroughly at home; where life was something of a picnic again; and the horrible war could for a time at least be shut out of sight. Best of all, there were the golden hours of "Home" on leave. "Home", that was so ready to welcome them with open arms, and that so many of them now saw for the first time in their lives. Yes, they preferred the French front, with all its foul German horrors, to the evils of Gallipoli or the everlasting deadliness of the Egyptian desert.

F. A. M.

CHAPTER XVI

CAMPAIGNS IN EGYPT AND THE SOUDAN

(February, 1915–May, 1916)

Egypt's Strategical Importance—Suez Canal Defences—Some Minor Operations—Turkish Mine-layers—Sinking of the *Teresias*—Egypt and the War—Treachery of the Senussi—History of their Sect—Won over by the Germans—The *Tara* Prisoners—Opening of the Western Frontier Campaign—General Wallace's Operations—Indecisive Victories—Sikhs and New Zealanders distinguish Themselves—Major-General Peyton assumes Command—South Africans in Action—Heroic Charge of the Dorset Yeomanry at Agagia—Reoccupation of Sollum—Dashing Feat of the Duke of Westminster's Armoured Cars—How the *Tara* and *Moorine* Survivors were rescued—Far-reaching Effects of British Triumph on the Western Frontier—The Darfur Campaign—A Truculent Sultan and his Lesson—Tribute to Sir Reginald Wingate—Prince of Wales's Visit to the Soudan—His Reception in Egypt by the Anzacs.

IT was hardly expected that the Turks would tamely accept their humiliating defeat on the Suez Canal in February, 1915, and leave Egypt to her fate. Even if the Turks were willing to submit, their German taskmasters would insist on another attempt to threaten Britain's proud position there, and thus menace her short sea-route and main line of communications to the East. Since it was unlikely that the Kaiser's fleet could wrest the sovereignty of the sea from our island race, this remained for Germany the only way to conquer the ocean by land. The odds must always be against a successful invasion of Egypt across the shifting sands of the Sinai Peninsula, but Egypt was not the immediate objective so much as the Suez Canal; and for such a shrewd strategic blow, ever present in German calculations, great risks were worth running. We shall probably never know the true story of the relations between the Germans and the Young Turks at this critical period, but it is possible that Enver Pasha, with his vain dreams of ruling as Sultan of Egypt, and Djemal Pasha, with his fanatical zeal regarding the reconquest of both Egypt and Tripoli, were ready to run graver risks even than the Germans, espe-

cially after the evacuation of Gallipoli and the fall of Kut.

Before either of these tragedies had been enacted, both Germans and Turks were profiting by the lessons of their first fiasco on the Suez Canal.[1] Under the organizing genius of the German engineer, Meissner Pasha, new strategic lines and pipes of water were laid to reduce as far as possible the difficulties of the desert journey; Djemal's so-called "Egyptian Army" was stiffened by further reinforcements of Germans; and every effort was made to spread the Holy War in all the surrounding regions.

For the rest of 1915, however, the most that could be done with Djemal's army itself—or the army of Baron von Kressenstein, who was supposed to be in virtual command of Djemal's force—was so to maintain the threat against Egypt as to compel us to keep a large army there which might have been more profitably used in other theatres of war. Though no further advance in force took place across Sinai for eighteen months after the first attack on the canal, the Turks continued to hold the Peninsula in some strength, undertaking a number of minor enterprises, chiefly with the object of damaging the canal and shipping, and giving the troops under Major-General A. Wilson, commanding the Suez Canal defences, a vast amount of heavy and monotonous work, especially in patrolling, to frustrate the enemy's attempts at mine-laying. In March, 1915, the Imperial Yeomanry Brigade, as well as the Australian and New Zealand Infantry, who had reinforced the troops on the canal, returned to Cairo—soon to be swallowed up in the Gallipoli campaign. With the withdrawal of troops to other theatres, and the sickness incidental to the ensuing hot season, the patrolling of the canal, especially at night, became very arduous. Major-General Wilson himself describes the nature of this work in one of his dispatches,[2] recounting all the minor operations following the disastrous defeat of the enemy at the beginning of February, 1915—the successful little affair at Tor at dawn on February 13, when a half battalion of the Gurkha Rifles, under Lieutenant-Colonel Haldane, secretly conveyed to its destination by H.M.S. *Minerva* from Suez, joined forces with the Egyptian Battalion in garrison at Tor, and scattered the Turks who had been threatening that place for some time past, killing 60, and taking 102 prisoners; the attack on March 22, 1915, of the mixed column of Hyderabad Lancers, a Territorial Lancashire Battery R.F.A., Bikanir Camel Corps, Sikhs and Gurkhas, under Lieutenant-Colonel Boisragon, V.C., who, moving out from Kubri, surprised an enemy force of some 800 infantry and 200 mounted men lurking some 10 miles from the canal, and after hurling it back with serious losses was only prevented by the heavy going across the sandhills from cutting off its retreat; and repeated reconnaissances by land, sea, and air.

The mine-layers were an ever-present danger. On April 8, 1915,

[1] Described in Vol. II, pp. 199–206.

[2] Supplement to the *London Gazette*, June 20, 1916.

for example, suspicious tracks were noticed on the east bank of the canal between El Kap and Kantara, and on the canal being dragged, sure enough a mine was discovered. It had evidently been placed there under cover of a demonstration on the previous day.

"Owing to this occurrence", wrote Major-General Wilson, "it became necessary greatly to increase our patrols. Intermediate night piquets were established between posts and a system of hourly patrols along the east bank instituted. Arrangements were made for a thorough search of the canal bank at daylight every morning, and officers commanding posts were authorized to stop shipping in case of any suspicious circumstances being detected."

Map illustrating the Campaigns in Egypt from February, 1915, to May, 1916

May, 1915, brought a number of hostile patrols within reach of the canal, and though they all retired as soon as our forces moved against them, one party of Turks, more daring than the rest, not only reached the shore of the Little Bitter Lake, but also waded out and boarded a Suez Canal pile driver, destroying a small boat and taking prisoner an Italian workman found on board. The nearest post gave chase immediately the occurrence was reported, but were unable to come up with the raiders, who were probably all mounted men. At the end of June, 1915, another party of Turkish marauders succeeded in reaching the naval section of the canal defences near the south end of the Little Bitter Lake, and, evading the naval launches which patrolled this section, placed a mine in the track of the traffic. The victim was the British steamship *Teresias*, which struck the mine on June 30. "Thanks to the skilful handling of the ship," writes Major-General Wilson, "and the prompt action of the Canal Company's official, the accident only blocked the canal for fourteen hours,

and the ship, though seriously damaged, has since been towed into Alexandria for repairs." To the indispensable navy—under Vice-Admiral Sir R. Peirse—fell the task of guarding the Bitter Lakes throughout these operations; and it was always ready and anxious, as Sir John Maxwell bore witness, "to help and facilitate the duty of protecting the canal and advising in any enterprise that needed naval assistance".

So the summer and autumn of 1915 slipped away in the monotonous but all-important zone of the Suez Canal, the enemy confining himself to these sporadic attempts to block the waterway—his chief object being to detain thereby as many of our troops as possible on its defence. Except during the actual attack in February, however, and the *Teresias* incident, traffic throughout this period continued practically as in times of peace. The drain on the Turkish forces under Djemal Pasha's own command, due to the need of reinforcements in Gallipoli and elsewhere, prevented all idea of another attack in force until the following year. "It was therefore possible," wrote General Sir J. G. Maxwell in his dispatch of March 1, 1916, shortly before handing over the command in Egypt to General Sir A. J. Murray, "while retaining just sufficient force to safeguard the canal, to move troops to other theatres where their presence was most required."

Egypt itself had suffered comparatively little, though it had had its share of crises, political, military, and economic. The masses of people were content with the new régime. They had escaped the hardships and sacrifices of most of the countries drawn into the vortex of war; and evidence daily accumulated that Britain was taking no risks in the matter. They were well aware that the only Turks who were likely to invade Egypt were those who, like the wretched procession of

Vice-Admiral Sir Richard H. Peirse, K.C.B., commanding the Naval Forces in the Defence of Egypt
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry)

the previous February, arrived as prisoners of war. There were anxious moments on Egypt's western front, as will presently be seen, and it was true that the smouldering disaffection of the reactionaries had not been entirely stamped out, while the Nationalist faction still claimed a few adherents, but the Turco-German influence, though it instigated attempts on the lives of the Sultan Hussein I and

Faithi Pasha—attempts which happily were unsuccessful—failed conspicuously to move the people as a whole.

On the western front of Egypt, however, the Senussi showed ominous signs as early as May, 1915, that the machinations of Nuri Bey, a half-brother of Enver Pasha, were beginning to take effect. This development was unlooked for, because the Senussi sect had seemed determined at the outbreak of the war to remain aloof, as it had done when the Egyptian Mahdi raised his standard of revolt in the 'eighties. The founder of this remarkable sect, Sidi-Mohammed-ben-Ali-es-Senussi, who died about 1860, was no mere ignorant upstart. His forefathers were venerable Mohammedans of history, and, like all other founders of the various factions of Islam, he claimed direct descent from the Prophet. An Algerian by birth, he had studied religion at Morocco, where he became a professor of theology, and after much wandering and pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina, earned such a reputation for wisdom and learning that he was once announced by Egyptian professors in the great mosque of El-Azhar as "the wisest of the Mohammedan race; the light of the pure law, the sun of the firmament, the tree of profound cognition". He founded a new school of thought, the doctrines of which involved the renunciation of the world and all such indulgences as wine, tobacco, sugar, and the wearing of ornaments of gold and silver, implacable hostility to all Christians and Jews, and strict secrecy. Condemning all veneration of dead saints, he preached that worship must be reserved for God alone, though living saints should be reverenced, being sacred through inspiration, which ceased with their death. His fame and following increased so that when, in 1845, he assumed the title of Khalifa, or successor of the Prophet, he veiled his face, as being too sacred for mortal eyes to gaze upon. And when he died he appointed his son his successor, calling him the Mahdi, who was promised by Mohammed to be the restorer of all things. In the early 'sixties the son and successor settled at Jerabub, near the western frontier of Egypt, and the ramifications of the sect spread all over North Africa. They occasionally came in conflict with General Joffre and other French commanders in the colonial wars before Armageddon; and after the downfall of the Egyptian Mahdi they were said to have extended their influence in the Soudan. When, in 1902, the Senussi Mahdi fell in fighting the infidel, he was succeeded by his nephew, Seyzid Ahmed, who made his head-quarters at the Kufru Oasis, in the Libyan Desert. Here, though nominally under British rule, and paying for one of his towns, Siwa, or Jupiter Ammon, an annual tribute of dates to the Egyptian Government, he remained a law unto himself, surrounded by a warlike race of Berbers and Arabs, whose military strength and political influence at the beginning of the Great War were largely an unknown quantity.

Here, obviously, was fit material for Turco-German conspirators, especially with a Kaiser who did not hesitate, in a letter written in Arabic "to the illus-

trious chief of the Senussi", and intercepted by the French, to proclaim himself "the Envoy of Allah and Protector of Islam", and pray to Allah that the Senussi would "expel all infidels from the lands which belonged to the true believers". German agents had already wormed their way among this austere fraternity in 1911, when they helped the Turks under Enver Pasha to arm the desert tribes against the Italians in Tripoli during the Turco-Italian campaign. This danger on the western front of Egypt was not overlooked when the Great War broke out, but for some time after the outbreak of hostilities the anti-British influence inspired by the Turkish party in Tripoli, under the leadership of Nuri Bey, was not strongly felt. The first Turkish attempt on the Suez Canal in February 1915 was accompanied by no corresponding movement in the west, the attitude of the Senussi towards Egypt meantime, to all appearances, remaining friendly.

With the advent of Gaafer, a Germanized Turk of considerable ability, who arrived in Tripoli in April, 1915, well supplied with arms and sinews of war, this attitude underwent a marked change. "From that moment," wrote Sir John Maxwell a year later, "it became evident that the Turkish influence was gaining weight, and it was only by means of great forbearance, and by tactful handling of a delicate situation by Lieutenant-Colonel Snow, commanding the Western Desert, that a rupture was so long deferred." Having forced back the Italians to the coast towns of Tripoli, the tribes under the Senussi influence were probably flushed with success when two British submarines, sheltering from the weather on August 16, 1915, near Ras Lick, on the coast of Cyrenaica, were treacherously fired upon by Arabs under the leadership of a white officer. Casualties were suffered on both sides, but the incident was closed by the acceptance of the Senussi's profound apologies and his assurances that the act had been committed in ignorance that the submarines were British. A period of quiet followed, but German submarines had now arrived in the Mediterranean, and presently established secret-supply bases along this strip of coast; and early in November, 1915, while Sir John Maxwell was temporarily absent from Egypt in order to meet Lord Kitchener at Mudros, a series of events occurred which placed beyond all doubt the insincerity of the Senussi's continued assurances of friendship.

On the 5th of November the British patrol boat *Tara*—known before the war as the steamer *Hibernia*, which plied across channel on the Dublin-Holyhead route—was torpedoed off this coast by an enemy submarine, eleven men in the engine-room being killed by the explosion. When the crew of ninety odd had taken to their boats, and the steamer had foundered, the submarine came along and towed the survivors ashore, where they were handed over as prisoners to the Senussi. Two days later the *Moorine* and her crew shared a similar fate. When news of these events reached the British authorities strong representations were made for the immediate release of the prisoners, but the Senussi

Drawn by F. de Haenen

Ships of the Air versus Ships of the Desert: British aeroplanes bombing a Senussi camel convoy laden with ammunition

The sketch by a British officer from which the drawing was made was accompanied by the following note: "In the region of Baharia Wells, south of Dabaa, one of the four great wells in the desert between Alexandria and Matruh, two of our aeroplanes accomplished a very hazardous feat in dropping bombs on a Senussi village and demolishing a camel convoy. Some camels were laden with high-explosives, and violent explosions occurred, causing great damage."

merely feigned ignorance of both occurrences, pretending to discredit them. Meantime the isolated Egyptian post on the coast at Sollum, near the Tripolitan frontier, had been shelled by the enemy submarines, the Egyptian coastguard cruiser *Abbas* being sunk at her moorings, and another, the *Nur el Bahr*, receiving considerable damage from shell-fire. The position of Sollum became critical, and an emergency squadron of the Royal Naval Armoured Car Division was sent to strengthen the post, which was systematically sniped at night-time, and threatened by Senussi regulars. In these circumstances the negotiations which had been started whereby the Senussi should get rid of their Turco-German advisers in return for a sum of money, and thus preserve peace, were useless. There was no alternative but to recognize a state of war and take action accordingly.

All these events, as Sir John Maxwell observes, had caused a dangerous spirit of unrest to prevail throughout the country, and the possibility of internal disturbances was a source of greater anxiety than the external danger.

"This unrest was especially evident amongst the Arab population inhabiting the western edge of the cultivation—amounting in the Behera Province alone to over 120,000. The religious influence of the Senussi is great amongst these people, and their natural sympathies are inclined towards their brethren in the western desert. The above considerations made it imperative, on the one hand to keep the sphere of hostilities as far as possible to the west of the Delta, and, on the other hand, to avoid anything in the nature of a reverse. In pursuance of this policy it was decided to withdraw the western frontier posts to Mersa Matruh, and to concentrate at that place a force sufficient to deal swiftly with the situation; to secure the Alexandria-Dabaa railway as a secondary line of communication by land with the railhead at Dabaa; to occupy the Wadi Natrun and the Fayum as measures of precaution; and to watch closely by constant and careful reconnaissance the Oasis of Moghara."

Sollum Post, the garrison of which, consisting of 5 British and 2 Egyptian officers and 102 British and Egyptian rank and file, found itself opposed by 2000 Arabs under German and Turkish officers, had been evacuated by sea on the afternoon of November 23, such motor-cars of the Royal Naval Armoured Car Squadron as could be moved having previously been dispatched by land. Unfortunately it was found necessary in the withdrawal to abandon—after disabling them—three light cars and the two Egyptian army 9-cm. Krupp guns, and also to abandon an outlying post of one Egyptian officer and fourteen other ranks who failed to reach the beach in time, and were made prisoners. The evacuation of the posts of Bagbag and Barrani was effected by land on the same day. It was not without significance that during the march and after the arrival at Matruh a number of desertions occurred among the Egyptian Coastguard Camel Corps. These desertions amounted in all to 12 native officers, 2 cadets, and 120 other ranks, who took with them their arms, equipment, and 176 camels.

Obviously it was necessary to deal

with the situation quickly and efficiently. A Western Frontier Force was appointed under Major-General A. Wallace, and began to concentrate at Matruh—on the coast about 150 miles from Sollum—on the night of November 23–24, the first to arrive being detachments of the Sikhs under Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. R. Gordon. The presence of enemy submarines necessitated the sea journey from Alexandria being performed by night only, but by December 7 the concentration was practically complete. Major-General Wallace's force consisted of a Composite Mounted Brigade under Brigadier-General J. D. T. Tyndale Biscoe, including British Yeomanry, Australian Light Horse, and a Territorial Battery Royal Horse Artillery; a Composite Infantry Brigade under Brigadier-General the Earl of Lucan, including detachments of the Sikhs and three Territorial battalions of the Royal Scots, and the Middlesex Regiment; with auxiliary services, divisional train of the 1st Australian Division, and a detachment of the Egyptian Army Military Works Department, no Royal Engineers being available.[1]

"It must be acknowledged", says Sir John Maxwell, in pointing out that General Wallace had to overcome many difficulties beyond those caused by the enemy, "that this force, although the best available in Egypt at the moment, was by no means well adapted for the task which lay before it. Regiments and Staffs had been somewhat hastily collected, and were not well known to one another. The Composite Yeomanry Brigade, to give an instance, contained men from twenty or more different regiments. Before a really efficient fighting force could be collected much rearrangement was necessary, with the result that the composition was constantly changing; and it was, in fact, not until the middle of February that the conditions of the Western Frontier Force could be considered really satisfactory. Moreover, the lack of sufficient and suitable transport made it necessary for General Wallace to withdraw his troops to Matruh after each engagement."

The first offensive movement from Matruh took place on December 11, 1915, when a reconnoitring force under Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, consisting of 350 men of the Sikhs, three squadrons of the Composite Yeomanry Regiment, one section of a Territorial battery of the Royal Horse Artillery, a detachment of the Royal Naval Armoured Car Division, as well as a section of the South Midland Territorial Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps, was sent out to disperse a hostile gathering reported within striking distance. Marching westward at 7 a.m. by the coast road, the cavalry pushed forward in advance of the column and became engaged with the enemy, who was in considerable strength, before the infantry could join in. The going was so heavy that the infantry were unable to co-operate throughout, but the cavalry were reinforced during the afternoon by the timely arrival of a

[1] A battalion of the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade, with one company of the Sikhs, a detachment of the Bikanir Camel Corps, an attached Egyptian army machine-gun section, an armoured train garrisoned by Gurkha Rifles, and two 12-pounder guns of the Egyptian army artillery were sent at the same time to make good the Alexandria-Dabaa Railway and patrol to Moghara Oasis, while a battalion of the North Midland Mounted Brigade, with a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery, were dispatched to preserve order in the Fayum.

reinforcing squadron of the Australian Light Horse, and the enemy was finally driven back with the loss of upwards of 100 killed and wounded. Our own losses were not severe—32 killed and wounded—but the casualties unfortunately included Lieutenant-Colonel Snow, who was killed late in the afternoon by an Arab whom he was endeavouring to persuade to surrender.

Two days later the same column, reinforced by two companies of the Royal Scots from Matruh, was ordered to advance against a hostile Arab force under Gaafer Pasha, numbering 1200 rifles, with two guns and machine-guns, which had been discovered some 13 miles away by air reconnaissance. The enemy did not wait to be attacked, but advancing to meet Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, engaged him with reckless courage. What Sir John Maxwell describes as "a sharp and somewhat critical action" developed, but after a trying and anxious period the arrival of reinforcements from Matruh—two guns of the Royal Horse Artillery and two squadrons Australian Light Horse—turned the scale in our favour, the enemy at length being driven back with heavy loss. Darkness put an end to further pursuit, and on the following morning Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon's force returned to Matruh. Though the enemy had been beaten, and his casualties in this affair were estimated at not less than 250, against our total of 65 killed and wounded, the experience of the operations on both occasions had clearly shown that to obtain a swift, decisive result more strength was essential. Major-General Wallace was therefore reinforced at Matruh by a recently arrived battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade, two naval 4-in. guns, and a battery of the Honourable Artillery Company, while shortly afterwards a brigade of the 54th Division relieved the other New Zealand Rifle Battalion, now withdrawn to Alexandria.

Map illustrating the Campaign against the Senussi on the Western Frontier of Egypt

Meanwhile the enemy had also been gathering reinforcements, concentrating at Gebel Medwa, about 8 miles south-west of Matruh, where his strength was estimated from air reconnaissance and other sources to have reached about 5000 men, with four

guns and machine-guns. More than half the force were known to be Mahafizia—the Senussi uniformed regulars—and the whole were under the command of the Germanized Turk Gaafer. On Christmas Day, 1915, Major-General Wallace moved out from Matruh to give battle, starting before daylight, and dividing his force into two columns. The right column, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, and comprising the bulk of the infantry, with some of the Hussars and a section of Royal Horse Artillery, was to advance directly on Gebel Medwa; while the left column, commanded by Brigadier-General Biscoe, and including the remainder of the mounted troops and Horse Artillery, was to make a wide detour southward round the enemy's right flank in order to cut off his retreat to the west; H.M.S. *Clematis* was to assist as occasion offered with gun-fire from the sea. Leaving the cavalry to clear the arid zone to the south in its wide outflanking movement, the right column, under Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, marched westward along the Khedivial Motor Road. All went well until 6.30 a.m., when the advance-guard came suddenly under fire from artillery and machine-guns from the south-west. The enemy was soon driven off, and three-quarters of an hour later Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon was within striking distance of his main position —an escarpment about a mile south of Gebel Medwa, backed by rocks, caves, and small gullies which afforded every natural advantage to the defence. The plan of action immediately decided upon was to attack the enemy from his right flank with the Sikhs, while the Hussars and some Middlesex Territorials delivered a containing attack along his front. The advance of the infantry at 7.30 was greatly assisted by guns of the Royal Horse Artillery, which came into action on the high ground near the road, 2000 yards east of Gebel Medwa, and quickly silenced the enemy's guns, H.M.S. *Clematis* joining in at 7.45 with an accurate and useful fire at a range of about 10,000 yards.

Even so the Sikhs, deploying west of the road, and advancing with dash and enthusiasm, met with determined opposition from marksmen in carefully concealed positions. The Indians were reinforced at 9.30 by two companies of the New Zealand Rifles; a third company shortly afterwards being ordered up from the reserve to prolong the line to the left and clear a donga running parallel to the line of advance from which the Sikhs were suffering most of their casualties. It was then that the fun began, as one of the New Zealanders expressed it. These Dominion troops were receiving their baptism of fire, and were eager to prove that New Zealanders could fight as well in Egypt—or anywhere else for that matter—as in Gallipoli. In places the donga was so steep that when the men let themselves go they sometimes slid down 50 feet at a stretch.

While this was happening the crest in front of the Sikhs had been carried, and that battalion, with the two New Zealand companies on the right, had pushed rapidly forward, driving the enemy into the caves and gullies, all of which had in turn to be cleared.

At 11 a.m., when the western edge of the plateau was reached, Brigadier-General Biscoe's cavalry column, which had been considerably delayed by some hostile mounted troops, could be seen operating about 2 miles to the south-west, and, signal communication being opened, it changed direction along the Wadi Majid, where it again became engaged. The nullahs at the head of the Wadi Majid were thoroughly cleared at the point of the bayonet by 2.15 p.m., and after an hour and a half of sharp fighting the whole position fell into our hands, with numerous prisoners, 80 camels, and much live stock, as well as 30,000 rounds of small-arm ammunition and three boxes of gun ammunition. The cavalry column having finally driven off the enemy, with whom it had been engaged since two o'clock, succeeded in joining up with the left of the Sikhs at 4 p.m., but by that time, unfortunately, the bulk of Gaafer's force had already made good its escape westwards along the sea-shore, and the approach of darkness precluded the possibility of further pursuit. Gaafer himself lost his personal effects, besides some 450 men in killed and prisoners—apart from the wounded, whom he was able to get away—our own losses amounting to 15 rank and file killed and 3 officers and 47 other ranks wounded.

"The energy, resolution, and initiative displayed by Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon throughout this operation", wrote Sir John Maxwell in his dispatch relating to these operations, "is deserving of the highest praise, and in his difficult task he was magnificently backed up by his own regiment of Sikhs, temporarily commanded by Major Evans, and by the battalion New Zealand Rifle Brigade under Major Austen."

The New Zealanders, who with the rest of the infantry bivouacked for the night at Gebel Medwa, while the cavalry returned to Matruh, marched back to camp singing and in the highest spirits. They had had a "Merry Christmas", they declared, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. "Thus it was", to quote from the official account of the affair written by Mr. Malcolm Ross, New Zealand's Press Representative with the Expeditionary Force, "that the 'New Battalion' was blooded. They have started well, and I have not the least hesitation in saying that they will worthily uphold the reputation that New Zealand has already earned on the battle-field." It was not long before they had another opportunity of distinguishing themselves. After various minor operations in the neighbourhood of Matruh—operations heavily handicapped by the weather, torrential rains at the turn of the year transforming the whole region into a sea of mud—a fresh gathering of the enemy in force was discovered at Hazalin, 25 miles south-west of Matruh, the tent of the Grand Senussi himself being recognized in the camp. General Wallace, having been reinforced by the South African Regiment, set out on January 22 with the same force as before, reaching Bir Shola (16 miles) after dark, and bivouacking there for the night preparatory to striking the Senussi in the morning. At six a.m.

on the 23rd the troops advanced from their camp to engage the enemy in two columns, the right again commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon and the left by Brigadier-General Biscoe. Two hours later Biscoe reported the enemy 2 miles ahead of his advanced squadrons, the Australian Light Horse, who shortly afterwards became engaged. The Hussars and Honourable Artillery Company were immediately sent forward in support, Colonel Gordon's infantry column simultaneously pushing on in attack formation, the Sikhs leading. The enemy, 4500 strong, well-handled, and supported by three guns and several machine-guns, stood his ground stoutly, and though gradually pressed back, his retirement of nearly 3 miles on his main positions was conducted, as Sir John Maxwell testifies, with great skill, defying all our efforts to come to close quarters. At one time, indeed, when our flanks were being held up, the enemy made an attempt to surround us, and more than one dangerous situation had to be relieved with reinforcements before the flanks were secured. Meantime, however, the Sikhs and South Africans, with part of the New Zealand Battalion on the left of the Indians, had reached the enemy's main line, and by 3 p.m. the whole of his positions were won, his camp and stores being afterwards burnt. The Senussi had undoubtedly suffered a heavy blow, his losses being placed at not less than 700 killed and wounded, but unluckily it was again impossible to pursue the success to decisive victory, and so bring this troublesome side-show to a speedy termination. Throughout the day the factor of mud had played an important and unfortunate part, and approaching darkness and the exhaustion of the cavalry horses forbade further pursuit. The whole country owing to the abnormal rains was still little more than a quagmire, seriously hampering the movements of the cavalry, and rendering impossible their full co-operation with the infantry. Our own losses in this action on January 23, 1916, amounted to 31 killed and 291 wounded. "On the success attained", says Sir John Maxwell, "especial praise is due to the leading of the main attack and to the gallantry of the Sikhs, the South Africans, and the New Zealanders, who fought with invincible dash and resolution throughout the day."

Having thus dealt the Senussi a blow which, according to deserters, had gone far to shake the faith of his followers in his cause, Sir John Maxwell now decided that the time had arrived to recover the lost Egyptian coast line to the Tripolitan frontier by the reoccupation of Sollum. At this stage General Wallace, whose campaigning days had begun as long ago as the Afghan war of 1879, and who considered that the coming operations would involve a physical strain beyond his powers, "felt himself obliged, owing to age," writes Sir John Maxwell, "to tender his resignation of the command which he had held with unvarying success for the past three months". Major-General W. E. Peyton, C.B., D.S.O., was appointed in his stead, and his assumption of command on February 9 practically coincided with the final reorganization of the force, with sufficient camel transport to ren-

The Campaign in Western Egypt: dismounted troopers in action on Christmas Day, 1915—
continued on opposite page

der it completely mobile. Henceforth it was possible to follow up any success, instead of having to return each time to Matruh. Other important changes had taken place in the composition of the force. The Sikhs had been ordered to India, and though their loss, as well as that of the gallant New Zealand Battalion, was severe, they had been replaced by the South African Brigade, largely composed of young warriors fresh from their conquest of German South-West Africa, and commanded by one of South Africa's finest fighting men, Brigadier-General H. T. Lukin, C.M.G., D.S.O., who led the 1st Colonial Division, Cape Colony, in the South African War. The Composite Yeomanry Brigade had also vanished to another theatre of war, and been replaced by the 2nd Mounted Brigade, some troops from Hong Kong and Singapore also swelling the force at Mersa Matruh. Almost all that now remained of the original command was Lord Lucan's Composite Brigade of three Territorial regiments.

Drawn by R. Caton Woodville

The Campaign in Western Egypt: led horses coming out of action at Mersah-Matruh on Christmas Day, 1915—continued from the opposite page

Before recapturing Sollum it was necessary to recover Barrani, on the coast road, about half-way to the Tripolitan frontier. With this end in view, the first stepping-stone had already been secured on February 16 at Unjeila, where an advanced depot was established. Four days later General Peyton dispatched Brigadier-General Lukin to recapture this second stepping-stone at Barrani with a force consisting, in addition to the 1st South African Brigade (less two of its battalions), one squadron of Hussars and another of Yeomanry, a detachment of the Royal Scots, a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery, and two field ambulances. The troops had a long trying march across the desert sands for four days—reminding the South Africans of their campaigning hardships in German South-West Africa — before they arrived within striking distance of the enemy, who had been located by air reconnaissance at Agagia, some 14 miles south-east of Barrani. Here Gaafer Pasha and Enver's brother,

Nuri Bey — for both leaders were known to be in the Senussi camp — had gathered their forces in a position of exceptional strength on a dominating ridge, with machine-guns established somewhat in front of their main body. The 25th had been planned by General Lukin as a day of much-needed rest for his troops preparatory to a night approach and attack at dawn on the following morning, but the enemy, again demonstrating that he was by no means disposed passively to await attack, opening fire on the British camp at 5.30 p.m. with two field-guns and at least one machine-gun. The artillery was soon silenced, and the action which followed was of no importance, but it had sufficiently disturbed General Lukin's plans to make him abandon the proposed night march in favour of daylight operations on the morrow.

At 9.30 on the morning of February 26, therefore, General Lukin moved out with his whole force, save for a small detachment left to guard his camp. Two hours later, after the yeomanry had seized a hillock 4000 yards north of the enemy's position, the attack was developed, some of the South African Infantry moving forward in the centre on a front of about 1700 yards with the steadiness which is the hall-mark of seasoned campaigners. Yeomanry and two armoured cars operated on their right flank, with orders to pursue the moment the enemy should break, the remaining squadron of yeomanry, with two more armoured cars, similarly operating on the left. Other South African Infantry, with two further armoured cars, formed the general reserve. Such were General Lukin's dispositions when, as the attack developed, the enemy, after a fairly heavy fire with rifle, machine-, and field-guns, sent out his infantry, exactly as on previous occasions, attempting a rapid outflanking movement against the British left. This

Brigadier-General H. T. Lukin, commanding the South African Brigade

manœuvre was at once detected and frustrated by a company from the reserve, which, sent up in echelon behind the threatened flank, brought the counter-attack to nought. This danger over, General Lukin, "acting with admirable promptitude", to quote from Sir John Maxwell's dispatch, "withdrew his squadron from his left flank and sent it to strengthen his main pursuing force on his right; and there is little doubt that this quick decision did much to ensure the success of the

subsequent operations". The firing-line was now within 500 yards of the enemy. Throwing into the fight the greater part of his reserves—at the same time sending a staff officer to Colonel Souter, of the Dorset Yeomanry, to be ready for his opportunity to pursue and cut off the enemy—General Lukin carried the main position, and, in exact accordance with the plans, left the cavalry to complete the victory.

It was now that occurred one of the most brilliant feats of arms in the whole campaign—the charge of the Dorset Yeomanry (the Queen's Own), who, with gallant comrades from Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, had been specially mentioned in Sir Ian Hamilton's dispatches for their superb gallantry at Chocolate Hill, Gallipoli, little more than six months previously. The Dorsets had to fight without their horses in Gallipoli. Here, however, they were in the saddle again, and thirsting for just such an opportunity as now presented itself. It came when Colonel Souter, after allowing the enemy to get clear of the sandhills, where there might have been wire or trenches to interfere with the horses, and pursuing on a line parallel to, and about 1000 yards west of, the line of retreat, at length decided that the moment had come to charge. Up to that point he had only attacked with dismounted fire wherever the horses wanted an easy, but about 2 p.m. he saw for the first time, from a ridge overlooking the valley, the whole retreating force, extending for about a mile with a depth of 300 to 400 yards. The camels and baggage were in front, escorted by irregulars, their trained fighting troops, or Mahafizia, forming their rear and flank guard, well protected by maxims.

"About 3 p.m.", to take up the story in the words of Colonel Souter's own report, "I dismounted for the last time to give my horses a breather and to make a careful examination of the ground over which I was about to move. By this time the Dorset Regiment was complete, and as the squadron of the Bucks had gone on ahead and could not be found, I attacked with Dorsets alone. The attack was made in two lines, the horses galloping steadily, and well in hand. Three maxims were brought into action against us, but the men were splendidly led by their squadron and troop leaders, and their behaviour was admirable. About fifty yards from the position I gave the order to charge, and with one yell the Dorsets hurled themselves upon the enemy, who immediately broke. In the middle of the enemy's lines my horse was killed under me, and, by a curious chance, his dying strides brought me to the ground within a few yards of the Senussi General, Gaafer Pasha."

To this may be added the unofficial tribute of one of Colonel Souter's officers, who describes how splendidly the Colonel led them, in front of the whole regiment, and the regiment riding behind him in line as at a general's inspection. The fall of Colonel Souter just in front of Gaafer, with its dramatic sequel in the surrender of the Senussi leader, was, in the words of the same correspondent, "the most wonderful piece of luck". The Colonel was alone at the time, save for Second-Lieutenant John H. Blaksley and Trooper William Brown, both of whom had also had their horses shot under them. These three dismounted

yeomen were thus surrounded at the time by some 50 fit or lightly wounded enemy, and the situation, as Sir John Maxwell says, was distinctly threatening until the arrival of the machine-gun section decided the issue. Gaafer Pasha, who was then escorted from the a prisoner. Nobody in the world could stand against such an onslaught; against men who evinced such scant regard for death." Our losses were severe, but according to Sir John Maxwell they were justified by both the moral and material results achieved.

After the Dorset Yeomanry's Brilliant Charge against the Senussi: bringing in prisoners

field to a place of safety, had believed it impossible that any cavalry could survive the deadly storm of machine-gun fire which he had brought to bear upon the advancing troops. The charge itself he afterwards described as "bravery unparalleled". "It was not war," he said, according to Reuter's correspondent, "but it was immense. In theory it should have failed; in practice it succeeded, and I am to-day

"One squadron was deprived of all its leaders, two being killed and two having their horses killed under them. Without their officers' control the men carried on too far, and it was this squadron that suffered most of the casualties. The enemy's losses were also heavy, and it is most improbable that anything would have induced them to stand up to well-handled cavalry again."

For this remarkable exploit, especially for the capture of the Senussi

general, Colonel Souter, "whose resolution and coolness stood him in great stead at a very critical moment," was awarded the D.S.O., Second-Lieutenant Blaksley receiving the Military Cross at the same time, and Trooper Brown the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Barrani was now occupied without further opposition, and preparations were begun by General Peyton for the final advance on Sollum, towards which the enemy had retreated after his defeat at Agagia. That action deprived the Senussi and the Turks of their last hope that the British would try to retake Sollum from the sea, where, with the fort on the hill-top, and the escarpment rising sheerly from the shores of the bay, a landing could be opposed with every advantage on the side of the enemy. It was this escarpment, which runs round the Libyan Plateau many scores of miles, that decided General Peyton to send along its top two battalions of infantry, the armoured cars, his camel corps company, and his mountain guns under General Lukin, while the remainder of his force moved by the coast. General Lukin, who had already reached the inland plateau by the Medean Pass, was at Siwiat by midnight on March 13–14, the remaining infantry then being at Alim Tejdid, and the mounted troops at Bagbag. On the following morning both columns moved towards Sollum, whereupon the enemy, fully realizing that he was outmanœuvred and undone, abandoned the town in all haste, and took to his heels.

Now at last came the chance of the armoured cars under Major the Duke of Westminster. The enemy was reported some 20 miles away to the west, and not unnaturally, owing to his superior mobility, considered himself fairly safe. Hitherto the opportunities of the armoured cars had been comparatively few in the Senussi campaign owing to the nature of the ground over which the operations had taken place, but now at length they could follow the enemy's tracks along a road which, by comparison, was splendid. It ran beyond the Egypt-Tripoli frontier to Tobruk, 90 miles away on the coast. The going was so good after the first 8 miles that the pace was increased to nearly 40 miles an hour. If the enemy had been amazed at the charge of the Dorsets they were now thunderstruck as these new weapons of war came tearing along at their irresistible speed, rapidly reducing the distance until they came within sight of the main camp at Asisa—some 19 miles from Bir Waer, where the enemy had already burnt the German-owned munition factory —not more than a mile south of the road. Hundreds of fugitive Bedouins had been passed on the road, but no notice had been taken of these by the cars, who were out for bigger game. When the main camp was seen a mile away direction was immediately changed, and all but two of the cars advanced in line, these two, according to a preconcerted plan, proceeding about two miles farther along the road.

"As the cars approached", says the official account issued by the War Office, "one gun and two machine-guns came into action. These were smartly handled by the enemy,

but the whole gun teams were shot down while the cars were 400 yards away. The cars then dashed into the camp. The hostile forces scattered in every direction, and the pursuit was carried on. After about ten miles there was danger of the petrol supply giving out. It was found when the cars were again concentrated that all the enemy artillery had fallen into our hands. This amounted to three guns and nine machine-guns with twenty-four spare barrels, and some forty revolvers and a large quantity of ammunition."

All, too, at the cost of one British officer slightly wounded. Forty prisoners were also captured in this dashing affair, which, with the re-occupation of Sollum, effectually completed the defeat of the Senussi and their allies, driving their scattered and demoralized forces far beyond the Egyptian frontier. One more object, however, remained to be achieved before the campaign could be regarded as closed. There were still some ninety odd British prisoners in the hands of the Senussi—survivors of the *Tara* and *Moorina*, which had been torpedoed four months before. These were known to be somewhere on the Cyrenaica coast. Close examination of the prisoners captured by the Duke of Westminster led to the conclusion that the survivors could be found at a place some 75 miles west of Sollum. The place was identified as Bir Hakim from a letter, picked up near the ruins of Bir Waer, written by Captain Gwatkin Williams of the *Tara*, to Nuri Bey, complaining that the prisoners were starving and ill, and suggesting that medical comforts should be procured from Sollum. This, of course, had been written before General Peyton's advance, and threw a startling light on the condition of the captives, who, from letters previously published at home, were supposed to be well fed and humanely treated.

An attempt at rescue was at once decided upon, the task being again

The Duke of Westminster, awarded the D.S.O. for his Services with the Armoured Cars in the Senussi Campaign

entrusted to the light-armoured car battery, under the Duke of Westminster. That night every man in the battery was hard at work tuning up the machines, as though in preparation for a great tourist race, and the work continued throughout the following day. At three o'clock on the morning of March 17 the rescue expedition started from Sollum, the nine armoured

cars, twenty-six other cars, and ten motor ambulances being guided by Captain Royle of the Egyptian Coast-guard Service, and the only two natives who apparently knew anything of Bir Hakim or its whereabouts.

That race through practically unknown country, where the enemy might be lurking anywhere in dangerous strength, will be remembered as one of the most daring and romantic episodes of the war. It was still dark when the Duke of Westminster's procession of cars reached Asisa, the scene of his dashing exploit on the 14th. Here a halt was made for the first rays of dawn.

"The cars then hummed ahead," wrote a special correspondent on the Western Egyptian front at the time, in an account published in the *Morning Post*, "gathering pace as the shadows grew less. At sixty-five miles a small party of Arabs were disarmed, but were then set free as there was no room for prisoners. For miles the tracks of a car had been seen. At eighty-one miles a captured Wolseley belonging to the Royal Naval Armoured Car Division was found with the engine in good order, but with one of the back wheels buckled. It had improvised tyres. A great quantity of sheet rubber was washed up some time ago on this coast, presumably part of the cargo of a torpedoed ship. The Arabs rolled it up, bound it tightly with camel hide, and fastened it to the rims with wire. When an officer went out a few days later for this car he found it burnt."

Meantime the rescue column sped onwards, changing direction when 80 miles along the Tobruk road, turning due south into the desert. For a time the guides seemed to have lost their way.

"A hundred miles went by, then 105, which was believed to be the limit of the distance, but still there was not the faintest sign of the *Tara* camp. Between 110 and 115 miles no one spoke, and the silence suggested fears of failure. A mile farther Arabs were discovered near a mound in the distance. A halt was called. At two o'clock the Duke sent forward the armoured cars to attack. They raced up to within 200 yards of the mound, and, as one would expect, the first car was that of Lieutenant William Griggs, the famous jockey, who regards this as the biggest of classic races in which he has taken part. Before the relievers the prisoners were standing silhouetted against the skyline, absolutely motionless, silent as statues, dumb with amazement at the appearance of the strange throbbing fleet."

They were on the brink of starvation, and so weak when the Duke of Westminster and his party set them free once more that not a few of them shed tears of joy. Some put their arms round the necks of their deliverers and kissed them. Notwithstanding the pitiable plight of the captives, their Senussi guards had made them work for them up to the last, beating them with whips of hide until they did what was wanted. The Arabs, who had taken to headlong flight as soon as the cars appeared on the horizon, paid the penalty with their lives. The racing cars quickly had them at their mercy. Not one escaped.

With the rescue of the British prisoners and the safe return of the armoured cars the campaign in Western Egypt came to a triumphant close. For his distinguished services on both expeditions with his battery the Duke of Westminster was subsequently awarded the D.S.O. The distance travelled on the second occasion was about 120

miles each way, and, as Sir John Maxwell says in his dispatch, "the fact that the rescue was effected without any loss of life does not detract in any way from the brilliance of the exploit".

The success of General Peyton's operations had far-reaching effects. Our lost prestige through the evacuation of Sollum had been more than recovered by a campaign which in three weeks had not only driven the enemy back far beyond the Egyptian border, but had also captured his commander with all his artillery and machine-guns, and cleared the country for 150 miles. An immediate effect was the removal of the anxiety at one time felt as to the possibility of hostile outbreaks in Egypt itself, where agitation was known to be rife. The attitude of the people in Alexandria, and more especially of the Bedouin population of the Behera province, which had come under hostile influence, changed completely. For several weeks the Bedouins, reduced to a state of starvation by reliance upon the false promises of the Germanized Senussi, surrendered at the rate of hundreds a day, so that a special branch of the administration had to be established for their protection and control.

"On the east", wrote Sir John Maxwell in his last dispatch upon handing over the command in Egypt to General Sir A. J. Murray, to be faced shortly afterwards with his sterner task in Ireland, "the failure of the Turks to carry out their threat to attack Egypt and seize the Suez Canal has similarly resulted in a loss of credit and prestige. In the south, scattered forces still hold the Oases, and the inherent difficulties of desert campaigning will make them troublesome to deal with; but the failures in east and west have, it may fairly be claimed, had the result of establishing our hold upon Egypt more firmly than ever, and of convincing all the more enlightened of the people that they can gain nothing by intriguing with our enemies."

The Duke of Westminster's Armoured Cars in Action: the raid on the Senussi camp—continued on the opposite page

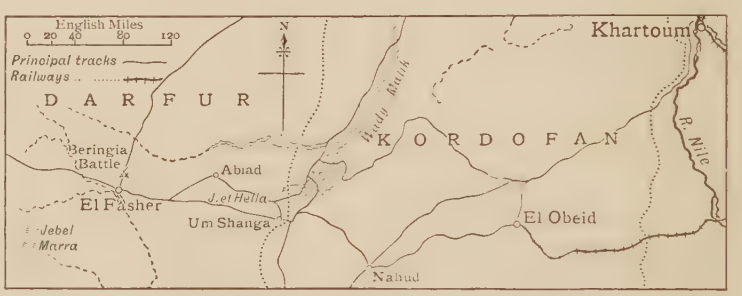
Just as General Peyton was winding up his brilliant campaign on the western frontier of Egypt another native storm was brewing in the Anglo-Egyptian Soudan, where, for some months previously, the attitude of Ali Dinar, the Sultan of Darfur, was officially described as "unsatisfactory and truculent". Darfur had remained the only province within the Anglo-Egyptian sphere of influence which had not yet been brought directly under the control of Khartoum, though subject to an annual tribute of £500. The Sultan, an uneducated and fanatical type of Moslem, began intriguing in 1915 with the Senussi and other tribes obviously misled by Turco-German propaganda, and early in February of the following year concentrated a threatening force on the Kordofan frontier at Jebel el Hella. He then addressed violent letters to the Governor of Kordofan and the Inspector on the border. One of them, according to Lord Crewe, in discussing these developments in the House of Lords in the following June, was couched in the most lurid terms, being addressed, with a sort of grim humour, to "the Government of Hell in Kordofan and the Inspector of Flames at Nahud", and expressed a determination to inflict upon all infidels those combined punishments in this world and the next which the Moslem was in the fortunate position of being able to distribute. Obviously Ali Dinar was sadly in need of a lesson, and not only in the interests of ourselves but also in those of the French, whose colony of Wadi bordered on the western side of Darfur.

The Duke of Westminster's Armoured Cars in Action: the raid on the Senussi camp—continued from the opposite page

In March, 1916, therefore, the Sirdar, Sir Reginald Wingate, ordered a mixed force of all arms to assemble at Nahud under Colonel Kelly, in readiness to crush the truculent Sultan's power for

mischief. Um Shenga and Jebel el Hella were occupied before the end of the month, and a further move forward was subsequently made to Abiad, where preparations were completed for the final advance on El Fasher, Ali Dinar's capital. The whole plan of campaign went like clockwork, in spite of the fact that communications extended some 300 miles through a country devoid of any means of transport. El Fasher fell on May 23, the very day fixed for its occupation in the original plan. The final advance had begun eight days before, the main action being fought near the village of Beringia, twelve miles north of the capital. Here the enemy, between 2000 and 3000 strong, held a strongly entrenched position, but on the morning of May 22 was induced by the Egyptian Camel Corps to leave this stronghold and attack our troops, which they did with the utmost rapidity and desperation. Their reckless courage was of no avail against the steady fire which mowed them down as with scythes, only a handful penetrating to within ten yards of our lines. Then our troops counter-attacked, totally defeating the enemy, whose minimum losses were estimated at 1000. Our casualties amounted only to five killed and 23 wounded. The Sultan's best troops were present, and most of his leading commanders were accounted for at the time, or subsequently surrendered. Ali Dinar himself when last seen was flying with a small following towards the mountain range of Jebel Marra, to the south-west of El Fasher—faced by a journey of one and a half days before he could reach that lofty hiding-place.

A thrilling feature of the fighting was the effective work, both before and during the action, of an officer of the Royal Flying Corps, who succeeded by means of bombs and machine-gun fire in compelling first a large body of hostile cavalry, and then a force of some 2000 infantry, to retire in disorder. This gallant officer, who, unfortunately, remained anonymous in the War Office account, was himself wounded by a bullet in the thigh, but returned safely to Abiad. For the rest the success was a triumph for Egyptian arms—for the force engaged was purely Egyptian—and the British officers in command, as well as for the British officials whose sound judgment and excellent organization had been conspicuous throughout.



Map illustrating the Successful Operations against the Sultan of Darfur

"The plans", as Lord Crewe bore witness in the House of Lords on June 27, 1916, "were most carefully drawn, and the execution was rapid and prompt. It was just what would be expected of Sir R. Wingate, who was one of the most brilliant representatives of that type of soldier-adminis-

The Heir to the British Throne in Egypt: Captain H.R.H. the Prince of Wales at an Inspection of Anzacs—with General Birdwood riding on his right

trator of whom the history of our government of India and the Soudan had given many examples. Sir Reginald was admirably supported by his head-quarters staff. A word of commendation should be given to the young officials, many of them of short service, who carried on the administration with such success under the Sirdar, and to the officer who carried out the military part of the expedition with the utmost care and with the success which all were glad to recognize."[1]

It was immediately before this expedition that the Prince of Wales paid his first visit to the Soudan, arriving on April 3 at Khartoum, where, as at Omdurman and elsewhere, his presence did much to prove again the feelings of loyalty to the British Crown. His Royal Highness was received at Khartoum by Sir Reginald Wingate, and drove through the town amid scenes of great popular enthusiasm to the Palace, in the gardens of which officers and native chiefs from all parts of the Soudan had assembled to meet him. Many of the chiefs were wearing the medal presented to them by King George on the occasion of his Majesty's visit with the Queen a little over four years previously.

The Prince of Wales had arrived in Egypt about a month before his visit to the Soudan, having been appointed Staff Captain to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. He had been gazetted to his captaincy on March 10, 1916, before leaving France, where his keenness, pluck, and modesty had won golden opinions among all ranks of the army, as well as the Military Cross for distinguished service. He had seen a good deal of the French front—where he received the Croix de Guerre from the President of the Republic in October, 1915—as well as the British, and was later to pay a visit to the Italian theatre of war. His appointment to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force created intense satisfaction throughout the army engaged in the defence of that much-threatened land, especially among the Australian and New Zealand troops, many of them veterans of the Gallipoli campaign. The Prince himself took the deepest interest in the work of all the divisions in the field, proving his physical fitness on several occasions by riding across long stretches of the Egyptian desert under the scorching sun to examine the front-line trenches. One day he attended an inspection of the Australian Infantry Brigade and Artillery by Sir Archibald Murray, at the close of which the "Anzacs", being permitted to fall out on the parade ground, rushed to line the route back to Head-quarters, all joining in a memorable demonstration in His Royal Highness's honour.

F. A. M.

[1] The conquest of Darfur was completed in the following November, when the last of the rebels were rounded up and the ex-Sultan Ali Dinar himself was killed.

CHAPTER XVII

SUBMARINES, MINES, AND RAIDS

(January–May, 1916)

The Character of the Period—The Persistence of the Submarines—The Armed Merchant Ship—The New German "Ruthlessness" and its Effects—The Diminution of Merchant Tonnage for Trade—The Career of the *Möwe*—The Action of the *Alcantara* and Consorts with the *Greif*—The Raid of April 25—Mr. Balfour's Assurance—Increased Force of the British Fleet.

WHEN looked at as a whole, the naval operations of the first five months of 1916 (and the remark holds good of later times) show us the constant movements, successful and unsuccessful, of the submarine, the sudden blows of the mine, and the occasional dash of the raider.

The survival of the submarines was of the nature of a disappointment. What was proved to be a premature hope that means had been found for limiting their range of action at least very closely had been felt in 1915. The First Lord, Mr. Balfour, had used rather indefinite but none the less decidedly optimistic language, and it had spread a general confidence. The measures of precaution taken were partly of a passive nature—nets, for instance, spread across approaches to harbours and narrow passages of sea. By their very success these guards tended to force the under-water craft of the enemy to act in open waters. But measures of a more drastic character were taken. A special maritime force, drawn mainly from the fishermen, was organized for the purpose of hunting down the submarines and helping the vessels they attacked. It was formed on a large scale, for it was reported to have employed a hundred thousand men. The operations of this guard were composed of innumerable separate cruises and actions. The methods adopted and the instruments used were, as a matter of course, kept secret, but the Admiralty allowed Mr. Noyes to repeat many stories of the feats and the sufferings of the "trawler" crews, in *The Times* at the end of August and beginning of September, 1916. This preventive service was busy in every scene of naval operations. Yet all the vigilance and activity of light cruisers, trawlers, and destroyers, and all minor successes, which were numerous on the side of the Allies, and occasional on the side of the enemy, failed to prevent the far-ranging sweep of a kind of vessel which can act in concealment and move below the surface.

It lay in the conditions of the war that more successes should be achieved by the Central Powers—for the Austrians rivalled the Germans in this field—than by the Allies. The chief prey of the submarine was the merchant ship, and as the Allies had many more trading-vessels on sea than their opponents, who were practically limited to the Baltic, they had many more to lose. This form of war on commerce

Drawn by G. H. Davis

With the Naval Auxiliaries in the North Sea: the fast motor-craft which help to guard our shores

played so large a part in the five months of war we are now dealing with that it calls for special notice, and for some statement of certain principles.

A merchant ship is essentially a non-combatant, and therefore not liable to be assailed in the same way as a man-of-war. It is liable to be captured, and to be taken into a port as a prize. When the captor cannot, or, for reasons which seem to him sufficient, does not choose to, carry her or send her into harbour, he can destroy her, but on the understanding, to which all civilized nations had agreed, that he saves the crew and such passengers as she may carry. It has therefore been a fixed rule that when a merchant ship is sighted by an enemy she must be called on to surrender. If she endeavours to make off, or shows fight, then she may be dealt with as a fighting-vessel—that is to say, be attacked by arms, subdued, or destroyed. But the case is not so simple as, on a mere statement of the general principle, it looks. A custom, dating from ancient times, when piracy was rife on all seas, had permitted the merchant ship to carry arms for her own defence. The proposal to forbid the carrying of guns by merchant ships has been made, but it has been opposed, notably by the United States, on the ground that it would encourage piracy. There are many instances in naval history in which merchant ships have fought actions, fortunate or the reverse, not only with sloops or privateers, but with frigates.

The ancient usage prevailed without arousing ill feeling or dispute until the war which began in 1914. In this struggle the introduction of the submarine made a great difference. There is no objection to the use of the submarine as a commerce-destroyer on grounds of principle, provided she acts subject to the rules adopted for other cruisers. But the Germans had from the first shown little regard for those rules. The case of the *Lusitania* is enough to prove how ruthless they could be, and at the close of 1915 several other examples, which differed from this one only in the magnitude of the loss of life incurred, were given, notably in the eastern Mediterranean and on the coast of Crete. The Japanese *Yasaka Maru*, the French *Ville de la Ciutat*, the P. and O. packet *Persia*, and other trading or passenger vessels of less importance were sent to the bottom by sudden attack. When charged with violating the old laws of nations the Germans either alleged that these unfortunate ships were carrying military stores, and therefore were employed for a warlike purpose, and so not entitled to be ranked as non-combatants, or they made use of an argument based on the nature of the submarine, and the alleged policy of the British Admiralty. They pointed out that the submarine is in herself very delicate and easily damaged. If, therefore, she approaches an armed merchant ship for the purpose of summoning her crew to surrender, she may be crippled by a single shot. And they pointed out that the British Admiralty had encouraged merchant ships to carry guns for their own protection, and to fire on the submarine at sight.

They drew the deduction that all British trading-vessels were provided with the means of acting as war-ships, and directed so to act against submarines. Therefore they were to be treated on the footing of war-ships—that is to say, to be considered liable to be attacked, without previous summons, from below the surface and with the torpedo.

If it were possible to discuss such a question apart from all considerations of humanity, we would be forced to allow that there was force in the German contention. A merchant ship which opens fire on a hostile man-of-war does herself play the part of a war-ship, and cannot claim to be otherwise treated. If we did not know what the previous conduct of the Germans had been, we might judge that the Admiralty was in error when it encouraged merchant ships to go armed. There would appear to be no more reason why the non-combatant afloat should be more free to use arms than he is on shore. But the Germans had shown a perfect readiness to assail merchant ships as if they were men-of-war. The use of guns for their protection was recommended because it had been already proved that they were subject to attack without warning, while the Germans, taking advantage of their own wrong, made the fact that certain merchant ships would be found to carry guns an excuse for refusing to treat any of them as non-combatants.

In the beginning of the year 1916 an intense agitation was begun in Germany in favour of giving a far greater degree of rigour to the conduct of naval operations. The chief theoretical exponent of this doctrine was Count Reventlow, a well-known writer on naval subjects, but it was notorious that the same views were held by Admiral von Tirpitz, the minister for the navy. The Admiral had sufficient influence to impose his policy on his Government. It was definitely adopted as from March 1, 1916, after which date merchant ships were to be attacked without previous summons. At the same time the German Government, through all its wireless stations (on April 29), published a list of cases which it professed to consider as justifying its decision. They ranged in dates from June 3, 1915, to January 17, 1916. Not the least curious feature of this apology was that some of the instances given, of the abuse of the use of arms by merchant ships, only proved that the possession of even a small gun could be an effective protection. The most typical of them all was this:—

"*June* 14, 1915.—West Hebrides, about 30 miles from Lewis, two unknown steamers sailing close to each other opened fire, both at about 4000 metres, against a submarine with small-bore guns from the stern. The impacts were very poor on the side of the submarine, but she submerged quickly and continued to remain deep down, seeing that the submarine attack would have been without any chance of success."

It is obvious that a vessel which was warned off by shots of a "very poor impact" must have been conscious of great weakness. But another case quoted was almost equally significant for a different reason.

"*November* 3, 1915.—In the western Mediterranean the British transport *Woodfield* did

not stop at a warning shot, but returned the fire at 6000 metres with a small gun. It was stopped by artillery-fire and sunk later on. From the list of the steamer's crew it is evident that there was a gun captain and naval gunners amongst them."

Now what this case proved was clearly that some submarines at least could safely act as any other cruiser would—and use the gun only. They had, on the showing of the German Government itself, no need to strike from below the surface with the torpedo and without warning. The real explanation of the line taken by the German Government was shrouded rather than revealed by these and such like apologies. The true purpose was to provide a colourable excuse for a general attack on all vessels without regard to nationality which were employed in bringing cargoes to Great Britain. The list cited instances, such, for example, as that of the S.S. *Melanie* in the middle Mediterranean on January 17, 1916, in which the British vessel showed neutral colours. The argument, though sophistical, was sufficiently intelligible. If a submarine could not be expected to run the risk of exposing herself to the fire of a merchant ship's guns, if all merchant vessels were presumably armed, and if the flag shown by them was no guarantee of nationality, it seemed to follow that the submarine must either cease to act as a commerce-destroyer at all or must assail every trading-craft, without regard to the colours shown, as if it were a warship. The first of these alternatives could not have been accepted in Great Britain, whose submarines were employed as commerce-destroyers in the Baltic, though with more humanity than was usual among the Germans. They on their part claimed to act on the second.

The first days of the new campaign of ruthlessness were not notable for any change in the conditions of trade at sea; but the Germans were undoubtedly acting on a plan and with prepared means. The fact that between April 1 and 30 eighty-four merchant ships, of which about a fourth were neutrals, were destroyed by submarine attack is sufficient evidence that the German menace was not wholly idle. The loss of the neutrals fell on all maritime peoples, from Norway to Spain. The purpose of this indiscriminate assault was unquestionably that defined by Mr. Houston, the well-known Liverpool shipowner, at the beginning of April. It was to deter neutrals from bringing cargoes of food and raw material to Great Britain, and thereby produce a failure of supplies and a rise in prices which could not fail to cause great distress in this country.

We cannot deny that the loss of shipping produced by this and by another form of attack about to be mentioned was more serious than it would appear to be when it is merely deducted from the total of our merchant navy. So large a proportion of the national tonnage—it was allowed to amount to nearly a half—was unavoidably diverted to military purposes that the deduction made in these ways from the portion left available for trade was sensible. The defect of British shipping was to a great extent made good

by neutrals. It was recorded, for instance, that one Norwegian sailing vessel of the venerable age of 127 years was employed at high freights for lack of a more modern carrier. If the neutrals could have been terrified into withdrawing, the injury caused Central Powers. The loss of American lives in the Channel packet *Sussex*, which was torpedoed in the Channel (March 24), and the sinking of the American S.S. *Petrolite* by an Austrian submarine in the Mediterranean produced international dangers which

The Torpedoing of the Channel Steamer *Sussex*: view of the vessel beached at Boulogne, showing how the bows were blown clean off by the explosion

would have been serious in the last degree. But the policy of striking at Great Britain through them entailed one formidable danger for Germany. The neutral can be injured with impunity when weak; but the United States were very strong, and when their shipping and citizens were injured they protested with a force which compelled attention from the they could not venture to face. But the dispute was a diplomatic one, and hardly belongs to the present subject, and then it produced its full effect at a rather later period than that with which we are dealing. On the whole the German campaign failed to justify the policy of Admiral Tirpitz—and the failure was no doubt the real reason for the eclipse which overtook him.

The results of the German submarine operations must of course be given in the bulk and by the aid of figures; but their character, their inhumanity, and essentially uncivilized quality must be shown by particular cases. There is an eloquence beyond all rhetoric in the simple statement of the Admiralty that:—

"The British steamship *Zent*, unarmed, was sunk by torpedo from a submarine on April 5, 10.10 p.m., without any warning whatever. She never saw the submarine. She sank in a very few minutes, and consequently forty-nine lives were lost."

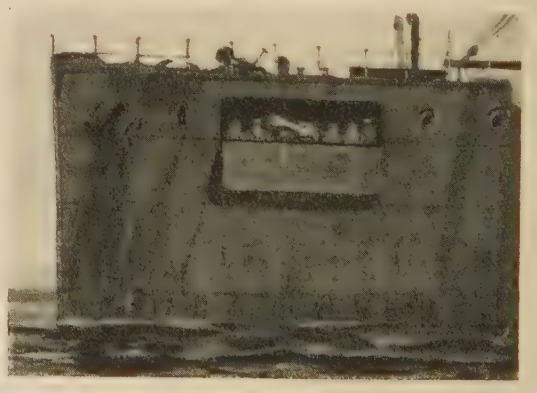
There is no sophistry which can conceal the fact that an act of this kind is essentially savage. But even when the submarine does not deliberately kill wholesale, when she allows the crew to get away in the boats, the humanity shown may be no greater. Let us take the case of the S.S. *Coquet*, destroyed in the Mediterranean on January 4, 1916, by an Austrian submarine. In this case the captain, A. C. B. Groom, and his crew of thirty-one were allowed to take to the boats. But they were far off land, the weather was rough, and the boats were leaky. Captain Groom expostulated with the Austrian commander, saying that it was no better than murder to send men away in such conditions. The Austrian officer laughed and replied that he would spare the next steamer he met and send her to look after them. The boats separated in the rough weather. The fate of one remained unknown; the other reached the coast of Africa in six days. Here Captain Groom, who was in it, and those who were with him were attacked by Bedouins. Two men and a boy were killed. Ten were taken prisoners. Captain Groom and one man who were left for dead were rescued by an Italian steamer. In this case the fate of those who perished was only postponed and made worse by the comparative moderation of the Austrian. And this was inevitable, for since the submarine cannot carry prisoners with her, at least not more than two or three, she needs must leave the crews of ships destroyed to the mercy of winds and waves. And this fact alone stamps a submarine warfare on commerce with the stigma of essential barbarity.

The scattering of mines is but another form of the same evil method, at least when they are not used as defences, but are laid on trade routes. The destruction of H.M.S. *King Edward VII* in the North Sea on January 9, 1916, of the cruiser *Arethusa*, also in the North Sea, carrying the broad pennant of Commodore Reginald W. Tyrwhitt, on February 14, and of the battleship *Russell* in the Mediterranean on May 4, was due to mines. As they were war-ships, they stand on a different footing from non-combatants; but the peril which proved fatal to them was no less disastrous to the P. and O. mail steamer *Maloja*, which perished on a mine between Dover and Folkestone on April 30, with the loss of 155 lives. And the *Maloja* was one of many British and neutral ships which were shattered wholly or in part by the same means.

While the German submarines were doing their worst in European waters, one of the livelier episodes of the war

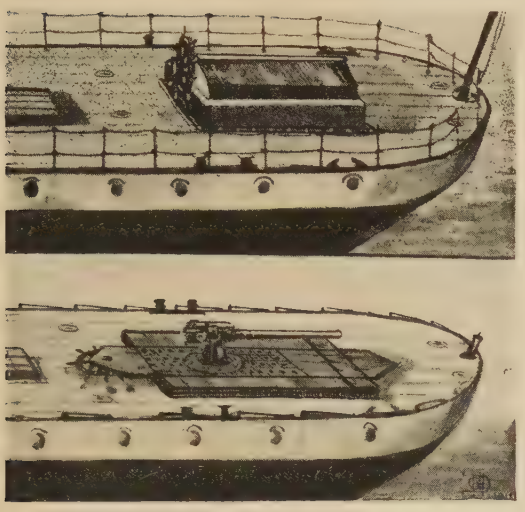
ran its course in the Atlantic. The successful commerce-destroying cruise of the armed German S.S. *Möwe* (i.e. Sea-gull), and her safe return to a home port, constituted an achievement of which the enemy had no cause to be ashamed, and was one we could hear of without bitterness. It was no doubt rather disappointing to have to learn that on January 16, and at a spot 60 miles to the north of Madeira, the S.S. *Appam*, of the Elder-Dempster line, had been captured by a German cruiser, and had (what was even less welcome) been carried across the Atlantic to Norfolk, in Virginia, as a prize. And this capture was by no means the whole of the captor's success. Up to March 4, on which day her return was announced, she had destroyed or taken thirteen British steamers, of 52,901 tons in all, and of a total value of £2,000,000 in round figures.

The history of the *Möwe* is one for which there are many precedents, and which will have, we may be sure, imitators in all sea wars. She was built, not as a fighting ship, but as a fruit-carrying boat, at Geestemünde, on the Weser. The line of trade she was intended to follow required that she should possess a good rate of speed, and speed was precisely the quality most needed for the military work she was appointed to perform. It was easy to strengthen such a ship so as to enable her to carry a battery which would be heavy enough to overpower an armed merchantman. The command was given to Commander Captain the Burggraff Count Nikolaus zu Dohna Schlodien, a naval officer. Captain Dohna Schlodien was allowed to publish a narrative of his cruise. It gives a lively, and on the whole quite credible, account of the successful career of such a craft as his. The *Möwe* escaped from a German port, which he does not name, at the very end of 1915. She was carefully disguised, but her success in getting away was due to the thick weather and to luck in not meeting a British cruiser. After running up the coast of Norway, the *Möwe* stood over to the British coast to lay mines in less than thirty fathoms. Thick and stormy weather, again aided by luck, enabled her captain to cast the mines. The German Government claim, with probability if not with truth, that the *King Edward VII* was lost on them. When that first duty had been performed the *Möwe* steered for her cruising-ground. It was one familiar to privateers and pirates in former times; it was on the coast and on the seas adjoining the north-west corner of Africa. The extent of the injury she inflicted on British commerce has been stated, and she did



One of the Forward Guns of the German Raider *Möwe*

The *Möwe* had two guns in the fo'c'sle concealed behind hinged steel plates. The plates were dropped when the raider prepared for action, exposing the gun as shown in the illustration.



The *Möwe's* 5.7 Gun, Concealed and as Ready for Action

The illustrations show the method of concealing the raider's stern gun, which was hidden beneath the casing ordinarily used to cover the hand steering-gear of a tramp steamer. The removal of a few bolts caused the casing to drop flat on the deck, revealing the gun ready for action.

some further harm to the French and the Belgians. In one case she was resisted. The S.S. *Clan MacTavish* made a fight, but was sunk. Her captain proved his spirit by his manful conduct, but the result of the encounter must be accepted as a proof that no mere armed merchant-ship can hope to defeat a vessel specially fitted for war, even though the assailant be originally of the same class as herself. The method of the *Möwe* and of all commerce-destroyers of her kind is adequately illustrated by the story of the *Appam*.

The *Appam*, a steamer of 7781 tons, taken just before the sinking of the *Clan MacTavish*, was on her way from Dakkar to Plymouth, and had aboard 301 individuals, crew and passengers. Among these were Sir Edward and Lady Merewether, who were on their way from Sierra Leone to the Leeward Islands, of which Sir Edward had been appointed governor. The actual capture cannot be better told than in the words of the *Appam's* commander, Captain H. E. Harrison:

"The day was bright and clear when the *Appam* was captured. She was travelling at a fair rate of speed when we sighted what appeared to be an ordinary tramp steamer, which was gradually coming closer. We feared no danger and made no preparations to resist, as we were not expecting any attack. Suddenly the tramp fired across our bows. I immediately hove to. Simultaneously the tramp's false forecastle head, which was apparently made of canvas, fell away, revealing a battery of huge guns. We surrendered without offering any resistance."

If the *Appam* had been on the outlook for an attack, and had made a fight, she would certainly have shared the fate of the *Clan MacTavish*. As she carried a number of interned Germans among her passengers, the captors were well able to take the course they did, which was to arm their rescued countrymen, put other prisoners they had in their hands into the *Appam*, and send her under command of a prize-master to Norfolk. The British captives were released by the Government of the United States, but the status of the *Appam* was a subject of diplomatic controversy. When the *Möwe* reached home, again with the help of thick weather and luck, she had still with her, according to the German authorities, "four British officers, 20 British marines and sailors, and 166 men, crews of enemy steamers (among them 103 Indians) as prisoners, and £50,000 in gold bars". The German

public, which had not had many occasions for legitimate rejoicing over achievements at sea, was pardonably elated by the *Möwe's* cruise. It may be allowed on our part that her captain and his subordinates appeared to have acted with humanity.

Yet the Germans would have made a great mistake if they had concluded that the career of the *Möwe* was more than a fortunate exception in a story of general failure. Before she escaped to the open ocean, other vessels—the *Meteor* for one—had tried and had not succeeded. The fate of one which attempted to repeat her achievement only proved how firm the hold of the British navy on the North Sea continued to be. On February 29, four hours before the return of the *Möwe* was announced, another German commerce-destroyer, the *Greif*, made an effort to slip through the British watch. She came out disguised with the Norwegian colours painted on her side. According to the rule accepted by all nations, it is an abuse to fire while showing neutral colours. But the only colours which must be taken to indicate nationality are those displayed at the flagstaff at the stern. When placed at any other point they may be used as signals or for ornament, but they do not indicate nationality. The Germans had, therefore, a technical right to claim that they could not be said to fight under Norwegian colours because they were painted on her side. But the plea was a somewhat pettifogging one, and the act went, to say the least of it, far to being a mean abuse of neutral colours. She was met by the *Alcan-*

Drawn by G. H. Davis

The Gallant End of the *Clan MacTavish*: the British merchantman sinking after her fight with the German commerce-destroyer *Möwe*

tara, a fine large vessel built for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company as late as 1914. The *Alcantara* was an armed steamer in Government service, and was commanded by Captain T. E. Wardle, R.N. The end of the *Greif* shows what would have been the fate of the *Möwe* if she had been less fortunate. The German ship, on being summoned, opened fire on the *Alcantara*. In the action which followed both were sunk, the German by gun-fire and the British ship by a torpedo. Before the action was concluded another armed merchant cruiser, the *Andes*, came up and aided in the destruction of the German ship. According to the German official account, the *Greif* engaged three British cruisers and a destroyer. If this could have been shown to be true it would only have proved how numerous and effective was the British watch. But as the survivors of the *Greif's* crew, 5 officers and 115 men, were taken prisoners, and, of course, secluded, the German Government could not know either the number of the *Greif's* opponents or, as it also alleged, that her crew blew her up. The British loss was 5 officers and 65 men. Captain Wardle received the Distinguished Service Order for his services in the action, and the same honour was conferred on Engineer Lieutenant-Commander C. A. R. Williams, R.N.R., for his services in charge of the engine-room.

A raid of another and less legitimate order than that which the *Greif* was intended to carry out took place on April 25, at the same time as certain events in Ireland, which cannot be said to belong properly to the naval operations of the war, though they did include the landing of the former Sir Roger Casement, and an attempt to land arms in Ireland. The promotion of a treasonable outbreak which could bring only disaster to all concerned was an act morally on a level with the bombardment of unfortified or only technically fortified coast towns.

On April 23 the Germans repeated their performances of November 3 and December 16, 1915. As an operation of war the raid was insignificant. The German squadron of battle-cruisers, attended by light craft, appeared about daybreak off Lowestoft, fired some shells into that town, fired also at some small coast-defence patrols and cruisers, and then vanished, followed by air-craft. The Admiralty statement records that:

"About 4.30 on Tuesday morning the German battle-cruiser squadron accompanied by light cruisers and destroyers appeared off Lowestoft. The local naval forces engaged it, and in about twenty minutes it returned to Germany, chased by our light cruisers and destroyers. On shore two men, one woman, and a child were killed; the material damage done seems to have been insignificant. So far as is known at present two British light cruisers and a destroyer were hit, but none were sunk."

The Germans claimed to have sunk a destroyer and two patrol boats. Among the latter was the trawler *King Stephen*, whose crew were taken prisoners. Yarmouth was fired into at the same time, and the German Admiralty assured the world that

"fortifications and important military buildings were damaged".

The general impression produced by this episode was not unnaturally that the German aim was simply to injure and terrify the civil population. There can be no question that if such assaults were to be frequently repeated, and at short intervals, with impunity, the harm done to those immediately assailed would be cumulative and

The Matron's Room

Effects of Shell-fire

After the German Naval Attack on Lowestoft: views of the wrecked convalescent home—one of the houses damaged by gun-fire

might become intolerable. Lowestoft and Yarmouth are important towns. The townsmen might well feel entitled to ask that the British Fleet should not only be so disposed as to be in a position to stop all attempts of the enemy to treat them as a species of whipping-boy for the whole country. They had now had three experiences of this kind, and this time they protested. A deputation from the two towns, headed by their mayors, waited on the First Lord of the Admiralty on Monday, May 8, to put the case before him. Mr. Balfour, who received them, promised a public statement, which was promptly given in the form of a letter for publication written on the same day. A good part of this reply may be said, without disrespect, to have consisted of soothing assurances and generalities. Mr. Balfour dwelt on the brutality of such destructive attacks, the risks they entailed for the Germans, the little effect they could produce on the naval supremacy of Great Britain, and other such topics. But he recognized that even half-hour bombardments may produce "anxiety and in some cases even terror" to the sufferers. He undertook to give reasons why confidence should be felt for the future. The most substantial part of his assurances lay in these words.

"In the earlier stages of the war considerations of strategy required us to keep our battle fleets in more northern waters. Thus situated they could concentrate effectually against any prolonged operation such as those involved in an attempt at invasion, but not against brief dashes effected under cover of night. But with the progress of

the war our maritime position has improved. Submarines and monitors, which form no portion of the Grand Fleet itself, are now available in growing numbers for coast defences, and, what is even more important, the increase in the strength of the Grand Fleet itself enables us to bring important forces to the south without in the least imperilling our naval preponderance elsewhere."

There is what is grandiosely called "a school of naval thought", that is to say, a number of persons who talk very loosely, who describe all measures of local defence as meant to soothe the fears of old women of both sexes. The people of Lowestoft, who had now suffered three such attacks, and had suffered loss of life and property, might fairly ask whether the British navy did not exist for the defence of the whole country, and whether an important part of the country was to be left exposed to constant attack in deference to "a school of naval thought" which applied an orthodox doctrine with pedantry. When we look at the German operations on April 25 in connection with former and later events we can well believe that they were designed to provoke a separation of British forces which would enable an attack to be made on the North Sea Fleet with a better chance of success than if it were to be found united at one spot. But in view of Mr. Balfour's declaration, which was of course made on behalf of the whole Board, the people of Lowestoft and Yarmouth were entitled to believe that the numbers of the British Fleet had now reached a level which made it safe to station an effective part of the whole to protect a portion of the coast so open to attack, and so often attacked. Since that was happily the case the neglect to provide defence for the future would have been unpardonable. It is true that the fleet or army which tries to protect everything at once often ends by protecting nothing. The defence is liable to be everywhere weak, and therefore to be broken down by a concentrated attack. And this is particularly the case in naval warfare, since it is not possible to trench the sea. Yet concentration may be exaggerated, and all principles must be applied with discretion.

D. H.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SIEGE OF KUT

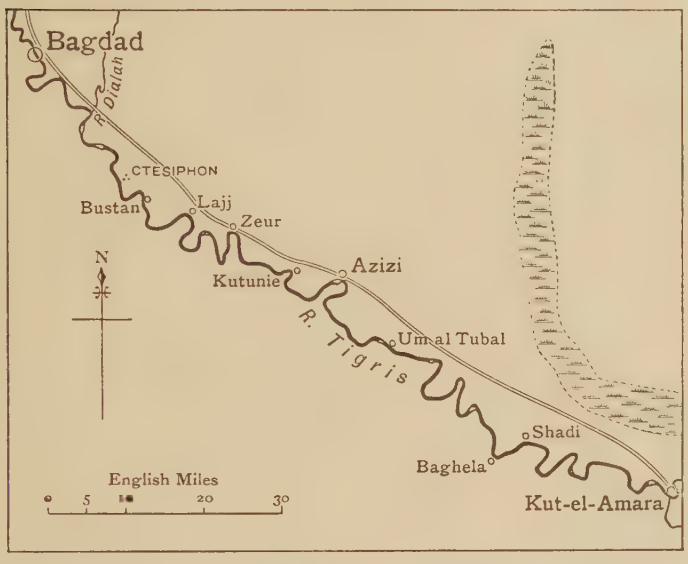
General Townshend's Gallant Leadership—His Fighting Retreat from Ctesiphon—The Battle at Um Al Tubal—Installed at Kut-el-Amara—The Town and the British Lines—Safe Dispatch of Prisoners and Cavalry Brigade—Relief Force concentrating at Imam Ali Gherbi—Kut completely Surrounded—Nur-ed-Din's Premature Summons to Surrender—Weeks of Desperate Fighting—The Battle of Christmas Eve, 1915—New Tactics of Besiegers—A Blockade Investment—Losses of the Garrison—Advance of General Aylmer's Relieving Force—Sir Percy Lake succeeds Sir John Nixon in Supreme Command—General Aylmer's Victory at Sheikh Saad—His Costly Failure at the Hannah Position—The Deluge—Sufferings of the Wounded—Situation of Kut Garrison—Discovery of Grain Stores—Von der Goltz's Arrival—Guarding the Approach to Kut—General Aylmer's Last Attempt—The Repulse at Es Sinn—A Golden Opportunity Lost—General Aylmer succeeded by Lieutenant-General Gorringe—King George's Message to General Townshend—General Townshend's Reply—Sir Percy Lake's Special Order to the Relief Force—Fighting the Floods—Minor Operations.

NOW that the official dispatches have been published of General Sir John Nixon and his successor, Lieutenant-General Sir Percy Lake, covering the operations in Mesopotamia from the closing months of 1915 to the fall of Kut at the end of April, 1916, it is possible to gather up the disconnected threads of our narrative of that unfortunate campaign. We left General Townshend at Kut on December 3, 1915, after conducting his masterly retreat from Ctesiphon,[1] not only saving his sick and wounded, but also keeping the 1350 prisoners included among the British spoils of that brilliant but fruitless victory within a score of miles of Bagdad. General Townshend's rare qualities as a leader had shone on the battle-field, but he had been tried more especially during the retirement. "Untiring, resourceful, and even more cheerful as the outlook grew darker," was Sir John Nixon's tribute, "he possesses, in my opinion, very special qualifications as a commander". The advance on Bagdad, like the advance on Constantinople by way of Gallipoli, had been a most gallant attempt to achieve what proved to be the impossible. In the face of the overwhelming reinforcements brought by the Turks against the wasted ranks of the 6th Division, retirement was the only alternative to defeat.

The full story has yet to be told of Townshend's trying march to Kut, with the ever-present danger of envelopment on all sides, but there is little doubt that it was only his timely retreat to Lajj under cover of darkness, during the night of November 25–26, 1915, which prevented him from being surrounded at Ctesiphon. From Lajj he reached Azizi unmolested during the night of November 27–28, and Um Al Tubal on the 30th, the Cavalry Brigade under Brigadier-General Roberts having had a brush with the enemy east of Kutunie on the previous day, when they drove back the Turks' advanced mounted troops who were

[1] Vol. IV, Chapter XIII.

attacking one of our stranded gunboats. The countless loops and twists of the Tigris which, with their shallow depths and shifting channels, had sorely handicapped the advance now added enormously to the dangers of the retreat. The gunboats under Captain Nunn, D.S.O., who had distinguished himself in the amphibious campaign at the capture of Basra, and of Nasiriyeh on the Euphrates, earlier in the year, played a valuable part in operating on the left flank of the troops, and protecting and assisting the steamers and barges when they grounded, but they themselves suffered heavy losses, including the *Shaitan*, *Comet*, and *Firefly*, and were unable to remain in touch with the troops during the retirement. Navigating trouble with our ships in the shoal water about Um Al Tubal delayed General Townshend's main body on the 30th, and gave the enemy a dangerous opportunity of creeping up in force. Early that day a mixed brigade under Major-General Sir C. Mellis, V.C., consisting of infantry and cavalry, with a battery of the Royal Field Artillery, had pushed on towards Kut to deal with hostile mounted troops who had interrupted the passage of our steamers at Chubibat, about 25 miles below Kut; but with increasing danger to the main body from the reinforced enemy advancing from Ctesiphon this mixed brigade was recalled, retracing its steps in time to share in the battle which ensued at daybreak on the following morning.



Map illustrating General Townshend's Fighting Retreat after the Battle of Ctesiphon, November 25–December 3, 1915

General Townshend needed all the strength he could muster to ward off the attack launched on this occasion with the enemy's whole force. In the fierce fighting which followed a Turkish column attempted to envelop his right flank, but, quickly taking advantage of a successful counter-attack, he was able to break off the fight and retire by echelons of brigades. The whole movement was executed in perfect order under a heavy shell-fire, and by midday the enemy had been shaken off. General Townshend afterwards reported to Sir John Nixon "that it was entirely due to the splendid steadiness of the troops, and to the excellency of his Brigadiers, that he was able to repulse the enemy's determined attacks and to extricate his force from

the difficult situation in which it was placed"; but all this would have availed little without the sound generalship and inspiring example of General Townshend himself, who, as in every other action in which he took part, remained, as Sir John Nixon bore witness, imperturbable under the heaviest

Major-General Sir C. Mellis, V.C., commanding the Mixed Brigade in General Townshend's Retreat from Ctesiphon
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry)

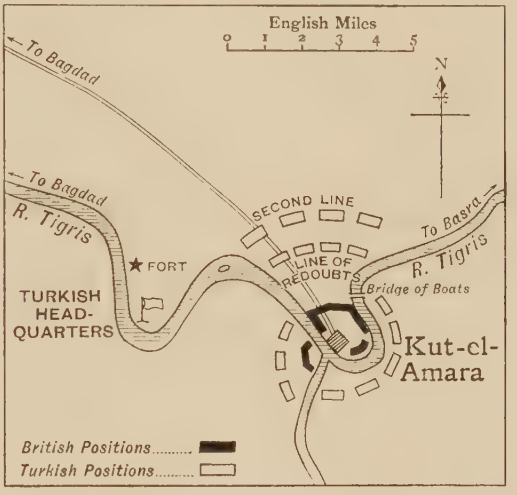
fire, and undisturbed in his judgment. It was no mean tribute, too, that the Commander-in-Chief paid to the officers and men of the mixed brigade, when he recorded that, after their exhausting march of over 80 miles in three days, with the battle thrown in, "their valour and discipline at the end of it were in no way diminished, and their losses did not include a single prisoner".

Continuing the retreat the reunited force reached Shadi on the night of December 1–2, and on the morning of December 3, as already mentioned, was installed at Kut-el-Amara, where it was decided that the retirement should end. So exhausted were the troops that a halt had to be called when within four miles of the British camp. For most of them there had been little to eat for forty-eight hours, and the infantry were too tired to move. But they had also worn out the enemy, and were prepared to give him an equally hot reception on their safe arrival at their destination. In spite of the vastly superior numbers which pursued them, they had inflicted heavy losses on the enemy during their rear-guard actions, while their own casualties throughout the retreat were officially given as under 300.

The entrenched camp at Kut was contained in a U-shaped loop of the river, forming a peninsula in the Chaldean desert about a mile across, which was regarded as the most defensible position between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf. The northern defences, like the Krithia lines across the southern zone in the Gallipoli campaign, stretched right across the peninsula, and were some 3200 yards from the town, which will be seen in the map at the south-west corner of the loop. Above the redoubt on the northern lines was a bridge of boats, guarded by a British detached post on the opposite side of the river. Another detached post was established on the southern bank opposite Kut, where a small village and liquorice factory were fortified and held by two battalions. Having reached his stronghold after

this fighting retreat, General Townshend had reason to believe that with his well-tried troops, all ranks of which had proved themselves not once but many times to be soldiers of the finest quality, he could hold out until a relieving force arrived. Knowing that it could not be long before the Turks would be round his flanks, he at once set about improving the defences, and relieved the congestion by evacuating the sick and wounded, as well as the Turkish prisoners, the whole of the 1350 captured at Ctesiphon having been safely brought away, as already stated. These were shipped to Basra, the last traffic to pass down the river from Townshend's stronghold being a hospital ship, which ran the gauntlet of the enemy's guns, and succeeded, in spite of some casualties, in making good her escape. The only vessel then left at Kut was the armed tug *Sumana*, this being retained for use as a ferry. The Cavalry Brigade and a convoy of transport were also marched down to Imam Ali Gherbi, about 50 miles below the town, before the enemy could effect an investment. One squadron was kept behind at Kut. The rest, hotly pursued by the Turks, fought their way to Imam Ali Gherbi, and having been reinforced with cavalry and guns from Basra, halted to form the advanced guard behind which a relief force was to be collected under the command of Major-General F. J. Aylmer, V.C. Reinforcements were hurrying from overseas, and measures were taken at Kut to prolong the siege until their arrival.

On the day that the Cavalry Brigade left that town — December 6, 1915 — the enemy closed on the northern front, the only means of exit by land, and by the following day the position was completely cut off. Nur-ed-Din Pasha, who, only some nine weeks previously, had been driven out of the same stronghold by General Townshend, was so confident that he now had the British commander at his mercy, that on December 8, after



Map illustrating the Turkish Investment of Kut

carrying out a heavy bombardment from three sides, he sent in a letter demanding his surrender. His erstwhile conqueror refused. Nearly five months were to elapse, and many Turkish reinforcements to be brought from other fields, before he was obliged to capitulate; and then to another Turkish commander; and not because the enemy had succeeded in securing a foothold anywhere within his lines, but solely because his gallant force, their scanty supplies at length exhausted, were vanquished by sheer starvation. Their dogged determina-

tion and magnificent courage, as well as General Townshend's admirable dispositions for the defences of the position, to which Lord Kitchener was afterwards to accord unstinted praise in the House of Lords, were soon put to the test by the investing army. On the day following Nur-ed-Din's premature summons to surrender, a heavy attack on the right bank forced our detachment covering the bridge of boats to retire, the right bank thereupon being occupied by the Turks at the bridgehead. That night the bridge itself was successfully demolished by a party bravely led by Lieutenant A. B. Matthews, R.E., and Lieutenant R. T. Sweet, of the Gurkha Rifles. Attack and counter-attack now succeeded one another intermittently till the end of the year, by which time the operations had settled down on the lines of regular siege warfare, the British redoubt at the north-east corner becoming the special objective of the Turkish shell-fire and sapping operations.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day of 1915 brought this phase of the investment to a close with a series of infuriated efforts to hack a way through. Apparently the Turks, again reinforced, believed that General Townshend's ammunition and supplies were giving out, and that they had only to press the attack long enough to capture the position before General Aylmer's force, which they knew to be concentrating only some 50 miles away to the south, could come to the rescue. Moreover, the Anzacs and the British army at Suvla Bay had slipped from the Turkish clutches in Gallipoli only a few days before, and the news had redoubled the determination of the Turks to seize their prey at Kut. During the night of December 23–4, therefore, and throughout the 24th, they concentrated their heavy fire on the redoubt, and with

General View of Kut-el-Amara from the River Tigris

the sheer weight of one of their attacks succeeded at length in breaching the British parapet and effecting an entrance. But not for long. A counter-attack drove them out, leaving the fortress a cemetery of Turkish dead. Returning to the attack again and again, the Turkish infantry continued the struggle far into the night, once more effecting a lodgment in the fort, and once more being ejected by its heroic garrison, who included battalions both from the British and the Indian armies. By Christmas morning, however, only dead and captured Turks remained within the British lines. The assault had been finally defeated, at a total cost to the enemy of about 2000 men. Our own casualties in these fierce attacks amounted to 315. Two days later the enemy asked for, and obtained, a four hours' armistice to bury his dead and remove his wounded, who were lying in large numbers in front of the fort.

The Christmas failure of the Turks to carry Kut by storm introduced a new phase in the campaign. Warned of the preparations for the approaching advance of General Aylmer's relieving column, the main Turkish army proceeded to take up a position across his path at Sheikh Saad, some 40 miles lower down the Tigris, the movement of troops in this direction from the Turkish head-quarters 6 miles above Kut beginning on December 28, and continuing for several days. Sheikh Saad had previously been occupied only by enemy mounted troops. The Turks now entrenched themselves in force astride the river, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of that town, contenting themselves at Kut for the future with a blockade investment, varied by shelling the position at night with big guns. During the first month of the siege the garrison's total casualties were 1540 killed and wounded; and though the enemy's losses had been at least twice as heavy, these were at once made good.

The chief fear in Kut was now the prospect of starvation and the shortage of ammunition, but the new year brought new hope to General Townshend's little army when it heard that General Aylmer, after several days of heavy fighting, had captured the Turkish position at Sheikh Saad and forced the enemy back. It is clear from the subsequent dispatches of Lieutenant-General Sir Percy Lake, K.C.B., who assumed command of the Indian Expeditionary Force, after serving as Chief of the General Staff in India, on January 19, 1916—Sir John Nixon being compelled by ill-health to return home—that the advance of the relief force was unavoidably premature. At that time General Townshend had not discovered the hidden stores of grain which enabled him to hold out for some months longer, and the reports disclosing his anxiety regarding the limit of his food and ammunition supplies, and the condition of some of his troops, influenced Sir John Nixon in ordering General Aylmer to advance to his relief at the earliest possible moment. There was also the important factor to be considered of the rapidity with which the Turks could reinforce the troops opposed to General

Townshend, and the desirability of forestalling them.

General Aylmer's leading troops, under Major-General Younghusband, advanced from Imam Ali Gherbi on January 4, moving towards Sheikh Saad by both banks of the river, and, getting in touch with the enemy on the morning of the 6th, found him entrenched in considerable strength astride the Tigris $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Sheikh Saad. An attempt was made to turn his right flank, but failed, as Sir John Nixon afterwards explained, "owing to the presence of hostile cavalry and Arabs in superior force on this flank". On the same day General Aylmer advanced from Imam Ali Gherbi with the remainder of his force, and, arriving on the following morning, ordered a general attack, Major-General Younghusband commanding on the left or northern bank and Major-General G. V. Kemball on the right or southern bank. It was two o'clock when our troops came under heavy rifle and maxim fire from the Turkish trenches, admirably concealed, at 1200 yards. The enemy's artillery was also active. The flatness of the mud-coloured ground offered no possibility of cover, and a haze made distance extremely deceptive to the advancing troops. "Nothing", wrote Mr. Candler, the representative of the British Press with the Expeditionary Force, "could exceed the gallantry of the attack. Individuals with wide experience of fighting on the Western front in France said they had experienced no hotter fire at the same range in that campaign." After fierce fighting lasting throughout the rest of the day the Turkish trenches on the right bank were captured by one of our infantry brigades, in the face of a galling fire, and with the help of another gallant infantry flank attack. Some 600 prisoners and two guns were taken in this success, but the enemy still held his trenches on the left bank, where he was too strong to be dislodged. Attempts to turn his left flank had been checked by counter enveloping movements from the north, and by night our troops entrenched at a distance from 200 to 700 yards from the Turkish positions.

Some of the reinforcements who arrived at Imam Ali Gherbi direct from the British base advanced next morning, and after a march of 20 miles entered into action the second day after taking the field. Little

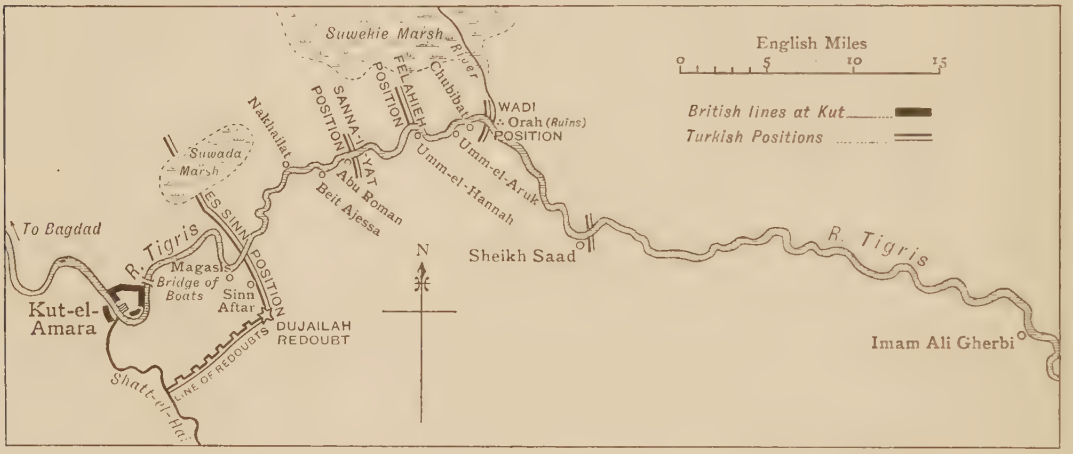
Major-General Younghusband, commanding the Troops on the Left Bank in General Aylmer's Advance
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry)

Major-General F. J. Aylmer, V.C., commanding the Tigris Column in the First Attempt to relieve Kut

progress could be made on the 7th, however, owing to the fatigue of the troops after the wearing battle of the previous day, but on the 9th the Turks were forced to abandon their remaining positions before Sheikh Saad and to retire up stream, their total losses for the three days' fighting being estimated at 4500. Unfortunately, heavy rains now began to fall, and though the retreating foe was followed by General Aylmer's force, the roads, with the alluvial soil churned into mud, became almost impassable. For the next two days active operations had to be suspended, the enemy meantime falling back some 10 miles to a position of great strategical strength at the junction of the Tigris and its tributary, the Wadi. Here, behind this waterway and on the right bank of the Tigris opposite its mouth, the enemy made his fresh stand.

Concentrating his whole force on the left bank of the Tigris, General Aylmer, after a night march on January 12, advanced against the Wadi position on the morning of the 13th, supported by the guns of the river monitors. A frontal attack pinned the Turks to their entrenchments, where they were exposed all day to our artillery fire, another movement in the meanwhile being made round their northern flank. "Before dark", to quote from Mr. Candler's account of the battle, "both frontal and flanking attacks were pushed home with great gallantry over ground void of cover, and a footing was established in the Turkish trenches." During the night the enemy again retired, leaving our troops in undisputed possession of the Wadi position, while they fell back another 5 miles and entrenched across the Umm-el-Hannah defile, bounded on the north by the Suwekie marsh and on the south by the Tigris. This brought them within about 25 miles of Kut, whence the none too reassuring reports as to the condition of the beleaguered garrison urged Sir John Aylmer to press forward without delay. But the weather, bad enough before, now became execrable. For several days a hurricane made navigation wellnigh impossible, and with a pelting rain, not only added greatly to the discomfort of the troops, but rendered movement by land most difficult. The river came down in flood and, overflowing its banks, converted the ground on either side into a veritable bog.

In the face of all these hardships General Aylmer's leading troops had followed the retreating Turks to the Umm-el-Hannah position, and entrenched themselves at the mouth of the defile in order to shut the enemy in and restrict his power of taking the offensive; reinforcements for the main column were steadily pushed up the line; and General Aylmer was actively engaged in reorganizing his force for



Map illustrating the Turkish Positions guarding the Approaches to Kut against the British Relief Force advancing from Imam Ali Gherbi

a farther advance with the least possible delay. He fully realized, as was pointed out by Sir Percy Lake, who at this juncture succeeded Sir John Nixon in the supreme command, that an immediate advance must involve some deficiencies in his organization and fighting strength, but these considerations were outweighed by the vital factors of General Townshend's apparently precarious position, and the desirability of forestalling the Turkish reinforcements. It was not until after the costly fighting which ensued in the unsuccessful attempt to force the Hanah defile that General Townshend discovered his new sources of supplies, and sent word that he could hold out, if necessary, for another eighty-four days. Had the discovery been made but a few days sooner, the extreme urgency of the situation would have disappeared, and other dispositions made that might have changed the whole fortunes of a campaign which, from small beginnings, was fast growing into a war of the first magnitude, bringing in its train first the deceptive promises and then the bitter disillusionments of the struggle in Gallipoli.

The fate of that melancholy attempt to win through to Constantinople, now sealed by the final evacuation of the Gallipoli peninsula on the night of January 8–9, 1916, at once reacted on the Mesopotamian campaign, setting free the flower of the Turkish army to reinforce the Bagdad divisions to an unlimited extent. This fatal development, coinciding with the opening up of the through route from

Germany by Belgrade and Sofia to Constantinople—thus paving the way for unrestricted remunitioning for the Turks—changed the entire complexion of the Mesopotamian campaign. German engineers were straining every nerve to complete the railway to Bagdad, and even though every condition of weather and tide had been in our favour—instead of the reverse—the Turks would still have been at a great advantage in this respect. How heavily we were handicapped is pointed out in Sir Percy Lake's first dispatch, describing the difficulties experienced in pushing up reinforcements, supplies, and munitions of war:—

"The number of steamers available in January, 1916, for river transport purposes was practically the same as when in June, 1915, the first advance up the Tigris took place. Additional river craft had from time to time been demanded, as augmentations to the force in Mesopotamia were decided upon, but owing to the peculiar conditions which vessels intended for the intricate navigation of the Tigris have to satisfy, the provision of these vessels was a difficult problem, necessarily entailing long delays, and the supply was never able to keep pace with the requirements of the force. In consequence of this, it was never possible during the period now under report either to concentrate at the Tigris front the whole of the forces available in the country, or to equip such forces as could be concentrated there with sufficient transport to make them mobile and enable them to operate freely at any distance from the river. It was always necessary, therefore, for General Head-quarters to balance most carefully the flow of reinforcements and supplies, so that the former should not outrun the latter."

When General Aylmer began his further advance on January 19, the bridge across the Wadi, to add to his difficulties, had been washed away several times by the high tides. The boisterous winds also had seriously hampered the construction of a temporary bridge across the Tigris, at this point not less than 400 yards across. As it was essential to establish artillery on the right or southern bank, in order to support by enfilade fire the approaching attack of our infantry on the Hannah position, guns and troops were accordingly ferried across. High winds and squalls of rain hampered these operations throughout, but by the 19th all troops for the right bank were established in their allotted positions there, the leading infantry brigades on the left bank meantime pushing nearer the enemy. January 20 was devoted to a systematic bombardment of the Turkish position, followed during the night by the advance of the infantry to within 200 yards of the opposing trenches.

When news first reached Great Britain of the disastrous fight which followed, the scene of action, through a misunderstanding of references to the Es Sinn position, was announced as within 7 miles of General Townshend's desert fortress, and the hopes founded on this misunderstanding were doubly disappointed when it became known that the action had taken place not 7 but 23 miles from Kut, and had failed. The bald official account conveys little idea of the bitterness and misery of that black day of January 21, 1916, on the dreary banks of the Tigris; when the wounded lay out in the mud, "and the rain and the heavens", to quote from

Mr. Candler's account, "came down and threatened to put an end to all strife in a general inundation". The Turks were holding a position of great natural strength, on the north bank of the Tigris, with their left resting on the swampy marsh of Suwekie and their right on the river. Thus both flanks were secure from being turned, while the whole front of a mile and a half commanded the approach over a level plain entirely destitute of cover. Knowing that the only hope of pushing through to Kut was by a frontal attack, our infantry, as already mentioned, had crept up overnight and pushed their advanced line to within 200 yards of the enemy's line.

The Amphibious Campaign in Mesopotamia: armed river craft in the advance up the Tigris

It probably needed many more guns than General Aylmer had at his command to prepare the way for victory under such conditions, for the pounding of the preceding day, and the intensive bombardment under which our troops advanced to the attack on the morning of the 21st itself, failed to ensure success. It also transpired subsequently that the wily Turk was by no means skulking in his trenches during our systematic bombardment. According to Mr. Candler, the enemy had known where to expect the attack, and moving along to his left and the Suwekie marsh, had thence enfiladed our advance into the bombarded zone. Most of the frontal fire came from his second line. On our left, nearest the river, the bombardment had succeeded in thinning the Turkish ranks in the front-line trenches, thus making our task easier; but on our right the troops, decimated both by frontal and enfilade fire, could only cover half the distance to the enemy's position.

Our left column, consisting of the Black Watch, with Jats and Dogras, were more successful, penetrating the Turkish front line with a rush that swept all opposition before it, not only capturing the trenches at this point, but also holding them for an hour and a half. Unhappily they were alone in their triumph, and remained unsupported until, overwhelmed by numbers in the Turkish counter-attacks, and bombed until their ranks were woefully thinned, they too were forced to retire. Supports, it seems, had been sent forward,

but these had lost direction, and, coming under heavy fire, had failed to reach them. It was now that the heavy rains began to fall, continuing throughout the day, breaking down telephone communication, converting the ground into a sea of mud, and heaping hardships upon troops already tried to the uttermost. When, at 1 p.m., and after further artillery bombardment, the attack was renewed, the state of the ground rendered rapid movement impossible. And the deluge of rain continued without ceasing.

"The river was brim-full," wrote Mr. Candler, "our camps were under water; the only dry place was the hold of a ship. We were encamped on the scene of the Great Flood, and it really seemed as if that Biblical visitation were going to repeat itself, engulfing Turk and British alike."

In the face of these appalling conditions, and severe losses from the enemy's heavy and effective fire, the second assault, like the first, failed in spite of every effort, and after maintaining their positions until dark our sorely-tried troops were slowly withdrawn to the main trenches which they had previously occupied, some 1300 yards from those of the Turks. As far as possible the wounded were brought in during the withdrawal, but their sufferings, when the ground was nothing but a quagmire in which vehicles and stretcher-bearers could scarcely move, were so acute and distressing that they may be better imagined than described. With the ground in this condition, and the troops still exhausted, it was impracticable to renew the attack on the following day; so General Aylmer obtained a six hours' armistice in order to bury the dead and remove the rest of the wounded to shelter. Our losses had been very heavy, and we had sustained a defeat which must have dashed many high hopes to the ground in beleaguered Kut, but the relief force, hurriedly improvised as it was, and handicapped by unspeakable weather conditions, had done all that mortal men could do.

"I cannot sufficiently express my admiration," wrote Sir Percy Lake, who joined General Aylmer at Umm-el-Hannah four days later, "for the courage and dogged determination of the force engaged. For days they bivouacked in driving rain on soaked and sodden ground. Three times they were called upon to advance over a perfectly flat country, deep in mud, and absolutely devoid of cover, against well-constructed and well-planned trenches, manned by a brave and stubborn enemy approximately their equal in numbers. They showed a spirit of endurance and self-sacrifice of which their country may well be proud."

Meantime General Townshend and his gallant garrison at Kut—thanks to their ground being raised above the level of the river—though apparently nearing the end of their resources, had escaped the worst consequences of the January floods. These, indeed, had turned in one respect to their advantage, driving the enemy from his trenches on the northern side of the Kut peninsula, and compelling his withdrawal to higher ground some 2000 yards away. Three days after the repulse of the relief force at Umm-el-Hannah, too, came the unexpected

The Joys of Campaigning in Mesopotamia: an officers' camp flooded out

discovery of sufficient grain stores—hidden away in the houses of the natives and mostly underground—to enable the commander of the garrison to send General Head-quarters the reassuring message that he could hold out for another eighty-four days. This was allowing for the feeding of the civil as well as the military population. The Arabs at Kut would willingly have left their homes to their fate if the Turkish troops had allowed them, but the Turks had no intention of relieving the British of any hungry mouths. They shot the few natives who abandoned the place in the early days of the investment, and made it clear that any who tried to escape would be executed in the same way. Thus, as Mr. Candler points out, the garrison was burdened with 6000 additional mouths, for to expel the Arabs would have meant their wholesale murder.

The discovery of the grain stores, which were commandeered and paid for, relieved the situation for the time being and enabled General Townshend to plan for three months' supplies on a gradually reduced scale. Hunger was henceforth to remain his chief problem, and he himself shared every privation, as well as every danger, with his troops. The Arabs, who had hitherto supported themselves, now received rations as supplied to the garrison. Aeroplanes were useful in bringing supplementary stores, from cigarettes and vegetable seeds to millstones for grinding the newly discovered grain, the large quantity of which could not be used at once owing to the difficulty of grinding for so large a population. It was not until the middle of February that the real privations of the garrison began, especially in the hospital, where milk and other essentials were lacking. Hospital

diet was now restricted to corn-flour or rice water for the sick, and ordinary rations for the wounded. Scurvy had set in before this. On January 26, General Townshend, always looking far ahead, had planted vegetable seeds, and these, we are told, bore welcome fruit before the exhaustion of the supplies which led to the surrender of the stronghold three months later.[1] Fortunately the troops, who possessed only the summer kit they were fighting in, had found a large consignment of warm clothing awaiting their safe arrival at Kut. It had just been received as a gift from the British Red Cross Society, and was probably the means of saving many lives.

With every succeeding week in the new year the Turks were strengthening their hold on the place which had so stubbornly defended itself against direct assault. Von der Goltz arrived on the scene, and strengthened the fortifications until not only Kut, but all the approaches from the British lines were rendered as impregnable as modern military science could make them. When the floods forced the Turks out of their trenches on the northern side of the Tigris loop, twenty-two rows of well-constructed trenches were counted in the abandoned position, the whole of which was also honeycombed with miles of communicating trenches. The loop itself was enclosed by a formidable series of redoubts which made the escape of the weakened garrison by that means out of the question. As for the British approaches to Kut, they were guarded by successive positions astride the Tigris which increased in strength the nearer they approached to the blockaded garrison, culminating in the defences at Es Sinn, some 7 miles below the town. Here the entrenchments extended for 16 miles, including a series of redoubts stretching back to the Shatt-el-Hai, the river which connects the Tigris at Kut with the Euphrates at Nasiriyeh. It was this strategic value of the Kut position which made its possession of such potential importance to either side, and probably led to the decision that General Townshend's retirement from Ctesiphon should end there. The main object of General Aylmer's Relief Column had not been to bring away the beleaguered force, but to help it to save Kut from falling again into the enemy's hands.

After the desperate battle of January 21, 1916, and the welcome news that General Townshend had roughly three months' supplies in hand, no further advance of the relieving force was attempted for some weeks. In the meantime preparations were made for renewing the offensive on a more promising basis, and an official announcement was made to the effect that the campaign, having outgrown the resources of the Indian army, would be controlled in the future by the Imperial General Staff at home, instead of, as hitherto, by the Secretary of State for India.

It was obviously necessary to take advantage of the lessons learned, and to make the most of the period of reorganization before a fresh advance

[1] General Townshend's requests for vegetable seeds and gramaphone needles gave a cheery note to the news from Kut at the beginning of 1916.

was made from Imam Ali Gherbi. The hurried improvisation of temporary brigades, divisions, &c., with which the force had perforce to set out at the beginning of the year had already shown its inherent weakness. Sir Percy Lake pointed out that divisions and brigades, the units of which had served together in France, had to be broken up to meet the difficulties of transport on a long sea voyage, and there had been no time on arrival in Mesopotamia to await belated units. Brigades and divisional formations had accordingly been hurriedly pieced together with such units as became available. This had proved a severe handicap to effective co-operation, and steps were now taken to reconstitute formations in their original condition. It also accounted for much of the medical disorganization. In many cases field ambulances had arrived after the combatant units. Distressing stories which now began to arrive of the cruel sufferings of the sick and wounded pointed to a lamentable break-down in the hospital arrangements. This was admitted in the House of Commons by Mr. Chamberlain as Secretary for India on March 21, 1916, when he said that according to the information in his possession there had been a grave and, he was inclined to think, an inexcusable shortage of necessary supplies above Basra. He made no attempt to palliate some of the things which had taken place, but he begged the House to remember that the Mesopotamian campaign had been carried on under circumstances of very great difficulty.

"This was in part due—in large part he did not doubt—to the enormous difficulties of river traffic. Only particular kinds of river traffic were suitable. They had to be of extraordinarily shallow draft, and the Government had swept this country and had had recourse to Egypt and to other countries to secure, or ascertain if they could secure, boats of a character suitable for these rivers. They had had misfortunes with regard to some of this transport. Some of it was destroyed or lost by perils of the sea *en route*, and undoubtedly the shortage of river transport accounted for a great deal of what had happened; but he did not think it accounted for all, and neither the Government at home nor the Government of India were satisfied with the state of things which had prevailed."

General Bingley, a distinguished officer, and Sir William Vincent, a distinguished Civil servant, were appointed by the Government of India to proceed to Mesopotamia to investigate matters on the spot, and a Commission sat in the House of Commons under the presidency of Lord George Hamilton to enquire into the whole conduct of the campaign. Judgment cannot be passed on anyone until the results of these enquiries are published.

Meantime Kut was still awaiting relief with valiant fortitude but ever-increasing anxiety as week after week slipped by, and the flood season, due about the middle of March, drew near. General Townshend, as well as Sir Percy Lake, knew that as soon as the Tigris came down in flood the Turks could cut the bunds if they wished and so flood the country—as the Belgians had inundated the last corner of their land before the German advance in the European war—and so render

further offensive operations in that direction impracticable. From the last week in January to the beginning of March, 1916, preparations were in full swing for a decisive advance which it was hoped would smash a way right through the Turkish main line of defence. Our trenches were again pushed forward on the northern bank farther in rear—at Felahieh, Sanna-i-yat, Nakhailat, and along the northern part of the Es Sinn line. This last stronghold constituted the Turkish main line of defence. Its advanced position rested near Beit Aiessa, and its right flank on the Dujailah Redoubt, which lay some 5 miles south of the river and 14 miles south-west of the

Reinforcements for the Tigris Force: British troops doubling across a pontoon bridge built over the marshy bed of a river

towards the fatal Hannah position, minor operations were undertaken to gather information and harass the enemy, the bridge was replaced which had been destroyed in the January floods, and reinforcements were pushed up from the base both by steamer and route march.

But the Turks had also been reinforced, and besides holding the Hannah position in increased strength had now constructed other defensive lines British lines on the right bank. By the first week in March General Aylmer decided to await no further reinforcements, but to advance with the maximum force for which land transport could be made available, with two days' food and water, and attack this Turkish right flank and Dujailah Redoubt as the decisive step towards the relief of Kut. Otherwise the coming of the inevitable floods might render any advance too late.

With the enemy equally alive to the situation it was difficult but essential to deliver the attack when and where it was least expected. Up to a point the advance which ensued seems to have been organized with remarkable success, but it failed most lamentably at the critical moment just when victory lay within easy reach. Until the

Guarding the Approach to Kut: some of the Turkish entrenchments at Es Sinn

The view shows the open nature of the ground over which the British and Indian troops had to advance.

report of the Mesopotamian Commission is published it will not be possible to tell the full story of the tragic failure at Es Sinn, though Sir Percy Lake relates it with some candour in his dispatch of August 12, 1916, published in the following October. With the growth of the Turkish defences it was obvious by the beginning of March that it would be impossible to carry the enemy's positions on both banks of the Tigris, but in order to deceive the Turks during the period of preparation our artillery on each side of the river engaged the opposing trenches on the left bank, the troops in front of the Hannah defile meantime making a great show of activity. Adverse weather conditions seriously delayed operations at the beginning of the month, thus enabling the Turks to construct trenches closing the gap which had hitherto existed between the great Dujailah Redoubt, the centre of the Es Sinn position, and the Shatt-el-Hai channel.

On March 7, however, everything was ready, and assembling his subordinate Commanders on the afternoon of that day General Aylmer issued his final instructions. He pointed out that surprise being the very essence of the enterprise it was imperative that the

capture of the Dujailah Redoubt, the key to the position, should be pushed through with the utmost vigour. His plan of attack, stated briefly, was as follows: While the greater part of a division under General Younghusband, assisted by naval gunboats, contained the enemy on the left bank, the remaining troops, formed into two columns, under General Kemball and General Keary respectively, were to deliver the main attack on the Turkish right flank. A reserve of infantry and the Cavalry Brigade were held at General Aylmer's own disposal. Kemball's column, covered on the outer flank by the Cavalry Brigade, was to make a turning movement by night to attack the Dujailah Redoubt from the south, supported by the remainder of the force operating from a position to the east of the Redoubt.

It was no mean feat of arms which succeeded in bringing this large force across the enemy's front over unknown ground without rousing his suspicions, and Sir Percy Lake pays fitting tribute to the excellent staff work and good discipline of the troops throughout the long night march. Unfortunately, to quote from the Commander-in-Chief's dispatch, "while Keary's column was in position at daybreak ready to support Kemball's attack, the latter's command did not reach the point selected for its deployment, in the Dujailah depression, until more than an hour later" —a delay which proved "highly prejudicial to the success of the operation". Nevertheless, the troops reached their allotted positions undiscovered by the enemy, and all that remained, apparently, was to push on and win. That at least is the inference to be drawn from Sir Percy Lake's candid account.

"In spite of their late arrival," he writes, "the presence of so large a force seems to have been quite unexpected by the Turks, as Dujailah Redoubt was apparently lightly held when our columns reached their allotted positions. Prompt and energetic action

General H. d'Urban Keary, commanding the 3rd Division of the Tigris Relief Force
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry)

would probably have forestalled the enemy's reinforcements. But time was lost by waiting for the guns to register and to carry out reconnaissances, and when, nearly three hours later, Kemball's troops advanced to the attack, they were strongly opposed by the enemy from trenches cleverly concealed in the brushwood, and were unable to make further ground for some time, though assisted by Keary's attack upon the Redoubt from the east."

The golden opportunity had been

lost, and General Townshend, only some seven miles away, who was probably prepared to welcome General Aylmer to Kut that very evening, had to steel his heart against another disappointment. Though the day was not given up as lost with the failure of the belated attack on the Dujailah Redoubt, its prospects of success diminished with each succeeding hour as fresh Turkish reinforcements continued to arrive. By one o'clock our southern assault had pushed forward to within 500 yards of the Redoubt, but concealed trenches again stopped further progress, while the Turks, on their part, were able to counter-attack with fresh troops from the direction of Magasis.

Turkish Entrenchments along the Tigris

Then came the unwelcome discovery by the Engineers that the water-supply in the Dujailah depression, upon which General Aylmer had reckoned, was insufficient, and that unless the Redoubt could be carried that day the scarcity of water would of itself compel our troops to fall back to the position from which they had started. In the desperate effort to retrieve the fortunes of the day, made at 5.15 p.m. with fresh attacks from the south and east under cover of a heavy bombardment, the Manchesters and some other units, leading the 8th and 37th Infantry Brigades in the eastern assault, nearly snatched a victory at the eleventh hour, winning a foothold right in the Redoubt itself. Here, however, they were heavily counter-attacked by the reinforced enemy, "and being subjected to an extremely rapid and accurate shrapnel fire from concealed guns in the vicinity of Sinn Aftar," writes Sir Percy Lake, "they were forced to fall back to the position from which they started". More could not be asked of men who had been under arms for thirty hours, including a long night march and a pitched battle. The element of surprise having been lost, too, General Aylmer considered that a renewal of the attack during the night could not be made with any prospect of success; and next morning, finding the enemy's position unchanged and his own force faced with insufficient water, he decided upon an immediate withdrawal to Wadi, which was accordingly reached that night (March 9).

Though the attack had failed, the men had fully earned the praise be-

Desert Warfare in Mesopotamia: an Indian cavalry regiment on the march, led by its British officers

stowed upon them by General Aylmer, in the Orders of the Day on March 10, for the gallantry and endurance which they had displayed.

"The night march", he wrote, "was carried out admirably, and the attack was executed in very fine style. The steady manner in which the retirement was performed amply proves that our want of success had not affected the troops in any way, while the enemy's lack of initiative shows clearly that our operations have inflicted great loss on the Turks and have seriously affected his *moral*."

General Aylmer took the opportunity at the same time of thanking the troops engaged in the Hannah operations "for the very fine work they have performed, and for the cheerfulness with which they have borne many hardships".

Three days later General Aylmer was succeeded by Lieutenant-General Sir G. F. Gorringe, who had won his spurs in the early triumphs of the Mesopotamian campaign and had been acting as Chief of the Staff to the Tigris column from January 28, 1916. It was General Gorringe who was destined to make the last attempt to save the beleaguered garrison at Kut. Here, in the meantime, General Townshend was holding on in the face of increasing hardships as the ration loaf grew gradually smaller and the pinch of hunger more and more pronounced. No details of these privations had been published in Great Britain at this period, but some inkling of the position was conveyed to the public by King George's message on February 14, 1916, in which His Majesty said:—

"I, together with your fellow-countrymen, continue to follow with admiration the gallant fighting of the troops under your command against great odds. Every possible effort is being made to support your splendid resistance."

General Townshend, replying through General Lake on February 17, said:—

"It is hard for me to express by words how profoundly touched and inspirited all

ranks of my command have been by His Majesty's personal message. On their behalf and on my own I desire to express to His Majesty that the knowledge that we have gained the praise of our beloved Sovereign will be our sheet-anchor in this defence."

This knowledge, and General Townshend's own inspiring example, enabled them to keep their flag flying at Kut for another two months or more. Their leader was no stranger to forlorn hopes. He had been the hero of the defence of Gilgit years before in one of the little wars on India's North-West Frontier, as mentioned in an earlier chapter; and he had also served in the Camel Expedition which attempted at the last moment to relieve Gordon at Khartoum. No doubt he sometimes wondered whether Kut would share the fate of Gilgit, which he had saved from the fierce tribesmen of Chitral, or that of Khartoum, which fell into the hands of the Mahdi. His hopes must have faded considerably with the failure at Es Sinn and the arrival of the flood season, which put an end to all prospect of relief during March.

On the 22nd of that month their

Indian Horse Transport for the Tigris Force: embarking horses on the Shatt-el-Arab from an improvised wooden pier

The horses for the cavalry with the Tigris force were taken up by steamer under charge of Indian troops. In the picture the horses are seen waiting in rows under an awning on the river pier.

urgent need for every effort on the part of the relief force was put before the Tigris Column by Sir Percy Lake in the following notice in the Orders of the Day:—

General Townshend, and the gallant troops under his command, who won the Battle of Ctesiphon against heavy odds, have now been besieged in Kut by greatly superior forces for over three months. They have witnessed the failure of two determined attempts to break through to their assistance, but they still implicitly rely upon their comrades of the Mesopotamian Force to do all that is humanly possible for their relief. In appealing to the officers and men of the Tigris Column to continue their devoted and self-sacrificing efforts the Army Commander would remind them that the whole Empire, while realizing the difficulties which they have to face, relies with the utmost confidence upon the resolution, energy, courage, and endurance of all ranks to carry out successfully the task entrusted to them.

Minor Operations on the Tigris: a village held by Turks set on fire after being shelled by the British navy

The men needed no urging forward. They were hard at work sapping along the northern bank for a fresh push at the earliest possible moment, but the unspeakable weather conditions were all against them. Minor operations also took place on the right or southern bank, in which enemy trenches were taken and prisoners captured, but when the Tigris came down in flood on March 15 its heavy inundations had forced our troops to evacuate their advanced positions on that bank. The rest of the month was one long struggle with the floods to prevent the whole country from being inundated. With every available man turned to digging embankments active operations in the field were out of the question, save for such sapping as was possible towards the enemy's lines.

While the Tigris force was striving so hard to win a way through to Kut, little of note had occurred in other parts of Mesopotamia. The Karun line and the neighbourhood of the oil-fields, as well as the country to the west and south of Basra, remained undisturbed throughout the period under review. For the greater part of the time peace also reigned on the Euphrates, neither the Turks nor the Arab tribes in the vicinity of that river giving any trouble. When, however, General Aylmer began his advance on Kut along the Tigris from Imam Ali Gherbi, it was thought

advisable to make a demonstration northwards with the Euphrates force to a short distance from an advanced post at Nasiriyeh. This was in order to deter as many as possible of the hostile tribes on the Shatt-el-Hai channel, which links up the Euphrates with the Tigris at Kut, from joining forces with the enemy. At the beginning of January, 1915, the major portion of the force at Nasiriyeh accordingly moved out and encamped in the neighbourhood of Butaniyah Lake. Apparently nothing worth mentioning happened until a month later, when the troops were returning to Nasiriyeh, the object in view, according to Sir Percy Lake's dispatches, having been attained. Some of the tribes, hitherto quite friendly to the British, but obviously affected by events on the Tigris, mistook the return towards Nasiriyeh for a retreat, and treacherously attacked our rear-guard. Fortunately the attack was beaten off, a party of the Royal West Kents and a mountain battery receiving special mention for their very gallant behaviour on this occasion. The tribesmen had cause to repent their treachery on the following morning, when a small force marched out from Nasiriyeh, and taking them by surprise destroyed all their villages.

F. A. M.